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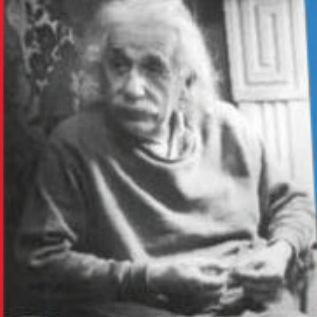
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Amateur Photographer



Best cameras & lenses

40 killer cameras,
40 lovely lenses,
but which should be
on **your** Xmas list?



Portrait genius
Marilyn Stafford looks back on her
amazing career as a portrait shooter

Passionate about photography since 1884

Winter wonders

Get your best-ever **images of birds**
during this atmospheric season



Planning for portraits

Time can be tight on a
photo shoot, so here's
how to work smarter

Plus

- A reader's impressive
shots of London
- Tony Kemplen on
a classic Zeiss

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We've never been so spoiled for choice when it comes to cameras and lenses. There is simply no such thing as a bad camera these days, and few dud lenses, but that doesn't mean some aren't better than others for different people. Our job is to point out the strengths and weaknesses of different kit, so buyers can decide what best suits their needs. This week we present our top

40 cameras and 40 favourite lenses to help prospective kit buyers narrow down the options. If you're not interested in kit right now we interview photography legend Marilyn Stafford, we present tips on photographing winter birds and location portraits, and lots more. If you enjoy this issue, why not subscribe? You'll save 40% and get it delivered to your door. Find out more on page 29.

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Winter Look Book by Eleanor Stobbart

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 85mm,
1/400sec at f/2, ISO 100

This winter fashion shot was uploaded to Instagram using the hashtag #appicoftheweek. It was taken by photographer Eleanor Stobbart. She tells us, 'This image was taken as part of an Autumn/Winter fashion editorial for a local model and fashion blogger. I particularly like this image as it is one of those natural moments between poses. I chose a location that was light and uncluttered with plenty of space, to minimise distractions in the photograph. Shooting fairly wide open with an aperture of f/2 gave the background that beautiful soft bokeh and made the model stand out. We shot in the morning on an overcast day, giving us a beautiful soft and flattering light.'

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CD/DVD Send us a disc of high-resolution JPEG, TIFF or PSD images (at least 2480 pixels along its longest length), with a contact sheet, to the address on page 28.

Via our online communities Post your pictures into our Flickr group, Facebook page, Twitter feed, or the gallery on our website. See details above.

NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Geoff Harris



Tough new Tenba backpacks

Tenba has expanded its Shootout range of robust backpacks with two new models – the 14L Slim (£170) and 16L DSLR – and revamped its existing models. Key enhancements include rear access on the 14L and 16L models for mirrorless and DSLR kit, a side-access panel on 24L and 32L (£260) models, and a new hip belt. Full details at tenbatough.tenba-bags.com/shootout-uk.

All-in-one Leica FOTOS app released

Leica has released its FOTOS Wi-Fi app for iOS and Android. It allows users to control all of their Leica cameras from a single place, rather than needing separate apps for each. You can control cameras remotely, complete with live view display, and copy images to your phone for sharing. Leica FOTOS currently supports the S, SL, M10, M10-P, Q, TL2, TL, T, CL, D-Lux and V-Lux models.

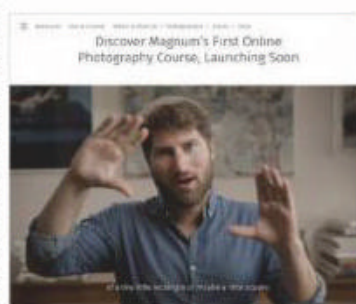


Nikon lens milestone

October was a productive month for Nikon – the Japanese giant churned out its 110 millionth Nikkor lens for interchangeable lens cameras. The company produced its first Nikkor F lenses for SLRs way back in 1959, but is now making headlines with its well-received Z 6 and Z 7 full-frame mirrorless models.

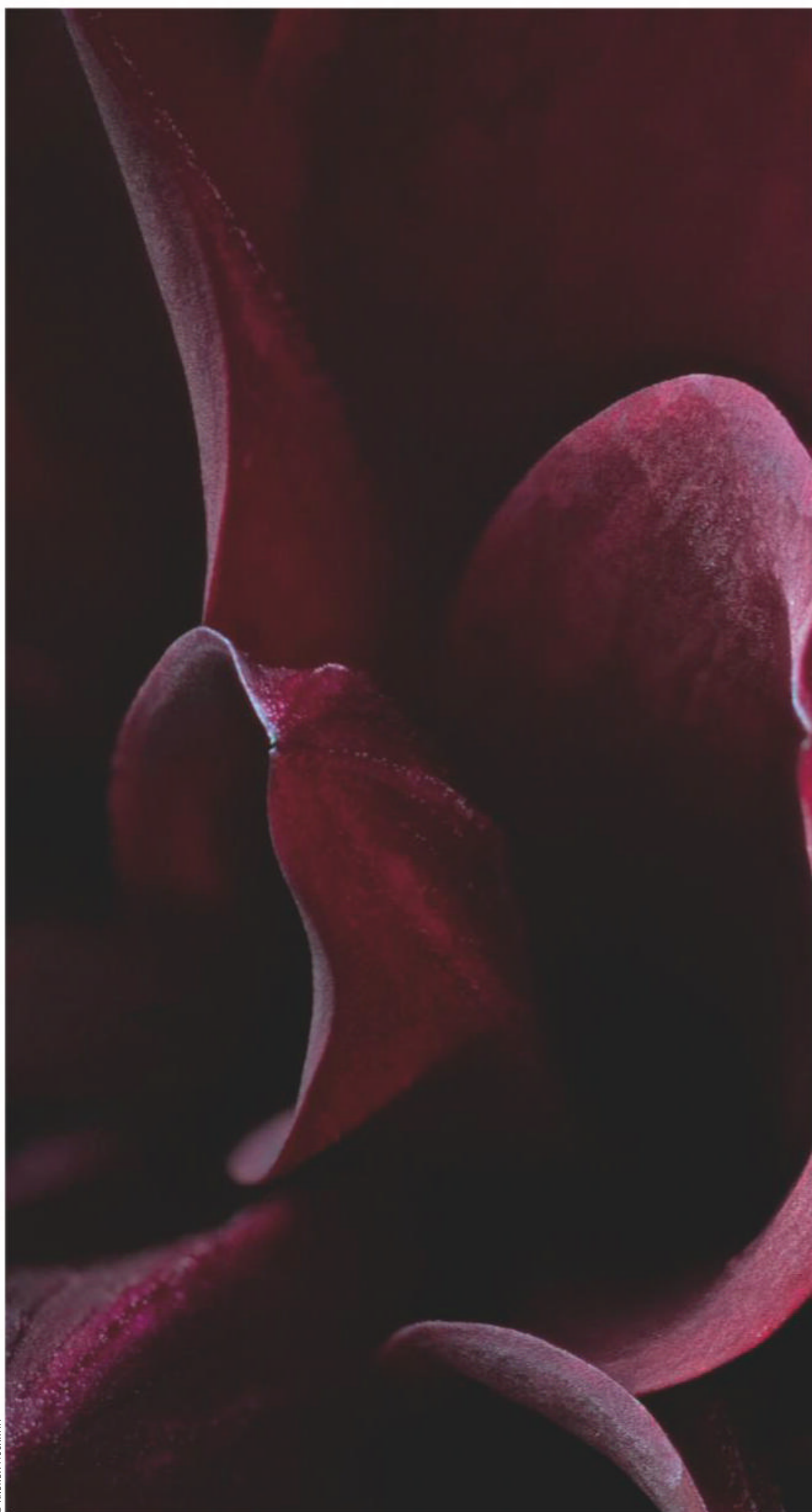
Magnum's on the street

Magnum Photos' first-ever online photography education course, The Art of Street Photography, goes live at the end of November. For \$99 (about £77) you can access 10 'engaging, in-depth' video lessons from such luminaries as Martin Parr, Bruce Gilden, Susan Meiselas and Peter van Agtmael (shown). See learn. magnumphotos.com for more.



A Zeiss little earner

The 2019 Zeiss Photography Award is now open. The topic is 'Seeing Beyond – The Unexpected', and the work will be judged by experts such as Dagmar Seeland, *STERN* magazine's picture editor. The winner will receive €12,000 worth of Zeiss lenses, €3,000 to cover travel costs for a project, and more. Entry is free, and the closing date is 8 February 2019. See www.worldphoto.org/zeiss.



© ANDREW MCCARTHY

BIG picture

Best of British wildlife photography for 2018 revealed

The British Wildlife Photography Awards showcase the diversity of the plant and animal life that exists on these islands.

Paul Colley bagged the big prize of £5,000 with an astonishing infrared capture of three bats at night – but you'll have to wait until the 22 December issue to see that one.



Professional ecologist Andrew McCarthy claimed the Hidden Britain prize with this image of a nursery spider lurking within the petals of a dahlia, waiting for her prey. The focus-stack comprises 42 images and took three or four attempts. Andrew focused just in front of the creature, then turned the barrel infinitesimally, taking a frame each time. The still conditions and bright overcast light were ideal for such an attempt.

Words & numbers

I've finally figured out what's wrong with photography. It's a one-eyed man looking through a little 'ole. Now how much reality can there be in that?

David Hockney English painter and photographer

1,732,128


Total camera shipments in September - a fall compared to September 2017's shipments of 2,301,700

SOURCE: CAMERA & IMAGING PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION (CIPA)



The new D-Lux 7 can be used with the Leica FOTOS app, enabling it to be remotely controlled from a smartphone

Leica reveals stylish D-Lux 7 compact

 LEICA has announced the Leica D-Lux 7, a stylish and relatively affordable compact that gives you the coveted 'red dot' bragging rights along with a bit of change from £1,000. The camera shares a lot of features with the Panasonic LX100 II, a popular tool for street photographers owing to its quality images and discreet dimensions. At the heart of the D-Lux 7 is a 17MP Micro Four Thirds sensor, EVF with 2,760-dot resolution, and a fast Leica DC Vario-Summilux 10.9–34mm f/1.7–2.8 lens (equivalent to 24–75mm). On the back of the D-Lux 7 is a 1.24-million-dot, 3-in LCD touchscreen, which enables you to set the AF point with one tap and control other camera functions. You



The D-Lux 7 has a fast lens equivalent to 24–75mm

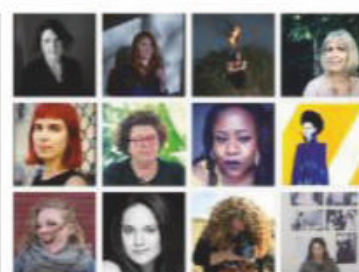
can also change the focus point after shooting, or several exposures with different focus points can be superimposed on each other and merged via focus stacking to create a greater depth of focus in macro exposures. There is 4K video

recording at a frame rate up to 30 frames per second and 100Mbit and in MP4 and AVCHD format. ISO sensitivity, meanwhile, maxes out at 25,600.

Camera specs aside, the D-Lux 7 is the first camera in the D-Lux line that can be used with the Leica FOTOS app which enables remote control of the camera from a smartphone and wireless transfer of pictures from iOS or Android devices (see page 4). Leica being Leica, the classic look of the D-Lux 7 can be complemented with a range of accessories such as natty cases, straps and a handgrip. We mentioned affordability at the top of the story and the D-Lux 7 will set you back £995 (note that you can now get the Panasonic LX100 II for under £850). See www.leicastore-uk.co.uk or visit a Leica dealer for more details.



The touchscreen allows you to set the AF point with one tap



RPS Hundred Heroines about to be named

 ON 14 December, the RPS will announce the results of its Hundred Heroines campaign, designed to highlight overlooked contemporary female photographic talent in what remains a traditionally male-dominated world. The call for nominations attracted thousands of votes worldwide, and a panel of judges chaired by artist, photographer, and Royal Photographic Society Fellow, Rut Blees Luxemburg, will select the one hundred 'heroines'. The full list of nominations is at bitly/100heroines. Prior to the official announcement of the Hundred Heroines, we'll be running an exclusive interview with the RPS's Del Barrett, who had the idea. It will be published on amateurphotographer.co.uk on 14 December.



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Ben with the Brain's Foto Guides map of Bath, that he created for photographers

Ex-AP staffer launches city photo guides

REGULAR readers may remember Ben Brain, who served as AP's technique and features writer from 2005 to 2007. Ben, who went on to have a successful career in monthly magazines, has launched a series of photography guides to cities called Brain's Foto Guides. The first is based on Ben's picturesque home city of Bath and is written entirely with photographers in mind. 'The idea was originally conceived while walking to work,' explains Ben, who also runs courses for Light

& Land. 'I would often see tourists taking pictures in Bath's regular photo hotspots and it struck me that they probably didn't know that they could also get a good, maybe even better, shot from another angle. I've also never seen a pocket-sized map showing photo locations.'

Rather than trying to include every tourist attraction, the locations have been specifically chosen for photography. 'The photo spots offer an alternative, beyond-the-postcard view of the city with the aim that they

inspire photographers to explore the city with their camera and an invigorated way of looking and seeing,' Ben adds. 'There are also practical tips on when and how to take photos, including a handy sunrise/set calculator to work out where and when the sun will be.'

Initial feedback has been good, so Ben is hoping to expand the series to cover other cities and beauty spots such as Snowdonia. Grab a 30% discount until 31 December 2018 at brainsfotoguides.com/discount/iloveap.

New Gitzo luxury straps

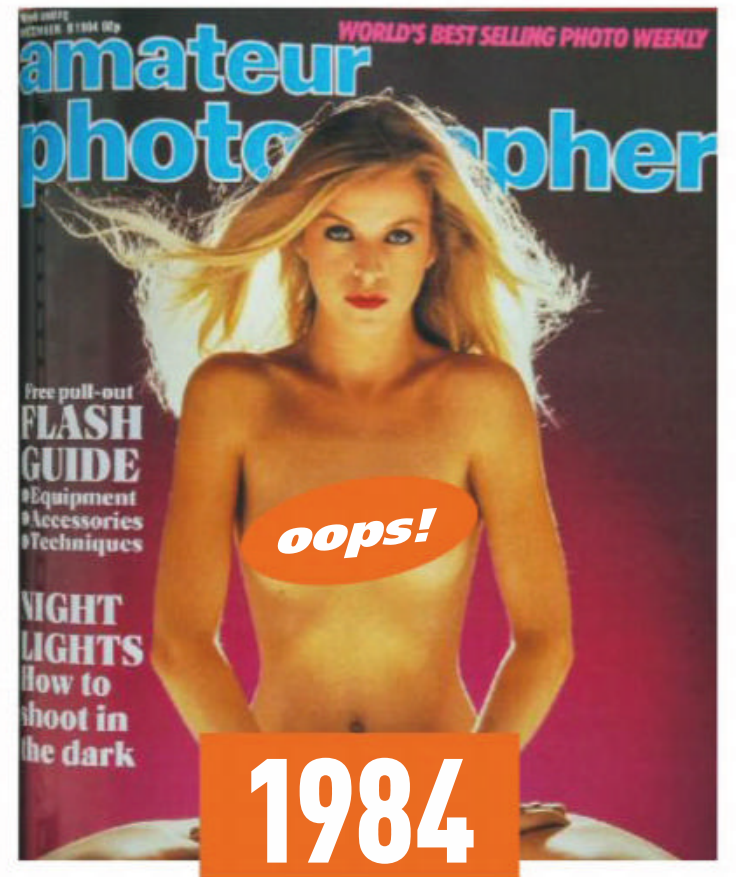
GITZO has announced the Gitzo Century camera strap collection. A modular system that complements the Gitzo Century camera bags range, the straps are made from premium Italian leather with a carbon-fibre look reminiscent of the company's tripod legs. 'The Gitzo Century camera strap system comprises interchangeable camera straps which ensure perfect fit and optimal comfort,' said a spokesperson. 'Each element can be quickly configured with the others in the collection thanks to the exclusive G-lock safety buckles that provide optimal security, even when supporting a heavy full-frame camera and its lens.' Prices start at £44.95. See www.manfrotto.co.uk/gitzo.



For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Back in the day

A wander through the AP archive. This week we pay a visit to December 1984



THIS issue we pass through the magic portal back to the wonderland that was 1984. This cover image is really shocking – you'd think with all our photographic expertise and fancy studio equipment back then we'd be able to avoid blowing out the highlights around the model's hair, but there you go. Magazine publishers weren't quite as 'woke' back then, so moving quickly on, there were some interesting features, including a travel guide to Bologna written by Sam Haskins (again, we apologise for the clanking headline). Gone are the days when this kind of travelogue would get you in a photo magazine, as everyone is a travel photographer these days... The cover-mentioned flash guide was full of useful tips too, and reading it makes you realise how spoilt we are today with our cheap, cost-effective TTL flashguns and huge range of affordable lighting accessories. Telephone number ISO levels and fast affordable prime lenses are also things we take for granted now, but shooting after dark wasn't so easy back in 1984, as the other main feature reveals. Returning to the cover, it could have been worse – they might have gone with Duran Duran as the model!



There was an interesting travel piece about Bologna

Exhibition

Roman Vishniac Rediscovered

Roman Vishniac was arguably one of the best social documentary photographers of the 20th century. **Tracy Calder** finds out more

'Roman Vishniac Rediscovered' is running simultaneously at The Photographers' Gallery and the Jewish Museum London until 24 February 2019.

On his seventh birthday Roman Vishniac received two notable gifts: a microscope and a camera. Like most children he was curious about the world around him and decided to combine the devices to magnify the leg of a cockroach, recording what he discovered. Now, more than a century after this experiment, The Photographers' Gallery and the Jewish Museum London have been granted access to his entire archive, comprising 50,000 objects. Particular highlights include 10,000 colour science slides, 10,000 negatives, thousands of pages of correspondence, 10,000 photographic prints, and some fascinating pre-war film footage.

Vishniac was born in 1897 to wealthy Russian-Jewish parents. His mother was

the daughter of a diamond dealer and his father was a manufacturer of umbrellas and parasols. He was born in Pavlovsk, but spent his childhood 400 miles away in Moscow. As a teenager he balanced his enthusiasm for photography with his work as a student of biology, chemistry and zoology. The family had a comfortable existence until 1918 when the fallout from the Russian Revolution prompted them to move to Berlin. At first Vishniac stayed in Moscow to complete his studies, but by 1920 he too had decided to move west. On his way to Berlin he married his fiancé Luta (they were hastily wed by a station master in a Latvian border town, but made things more official in a register office in Berlin).

Having settled in Berlin, Vishniac's love of photography intensified, partly because he struggled to find work in his trained profession as a botanist, and partly because he was energised by the thriving cosmopolitan culture he encountered there. He joined some of the city's camera clubs (as well as zoology and biology groups), and could often be found walking the streets with his Rolleiflex. 'He navigated his new adopted city of Berlin through his camera's lens,' says curator Maya Benton. To begin with, his pictures had a modernist style, capturing the interplay of light, shade and angles, but by the 1930s his attention had shifted to subjects of a more political nature.

One image, for example, shows his seven-year-old daughter, Mara, posing against a backdrop of advertising posters (*left*). The shot was taken in 1933, at a time when it was illegal for Jews to take photographs. 'He used his daughter as a prop so that he could document the radical changes that were taking place on the streets,' explains Benton. Sure enough, if you look closely you can see a swastika and the unmistakable image of Hitler on one of the posters. These seemingly innocent pictures show how 'normal' life was gradually giving way to extremism.



'He used his daughter as a prop so that he could document the radical changes taking place'

In the months that followed Vishniac continued to document the rise of Nazism in Germany, and the subsequent loss of rights for Jews, through his work. His pictures show Jewish soup kitchens, schools and hospitals as well as immigration offices and Zionist agrarian training camps. His efforts caught the attention of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), which was established to drum up support for the Jewish population. The JDC commissioned Vishniac to document the lives of impoverished Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. This body of work shows the reality of life between the two World Wars for Jewish families, and is perhaps his most famous collection of images. Many of the pictures he created for this commission were used to support relief efforts and fundraising campaigns.

Vishniac and his family left Europe in 1940, arriving in New York on New Year's Day 1941. For the next two decades he continued to document the impact of World War II, including coverage of the arrival of Jewish refugees to the USA, and relief efforts in Jewish Displaced



Above: Vishniac's daughter, Mara, posing in front of an election poster for Hindenburg and Hitler that reads 'The Marshal and the Corporal: Fight with Us for Peace and Equal Rights', Wilmersdorf, Berlin, 1933



Above: Jewish school children, Mukacevo, ca. 1935-38



Above: Eastern Europe, ca. 1935-38

Persons camps in Europe. Having established himself as a freelance photographer in New York, he resumed his interest in photomicroscopy – a field that became his primary focus for the second half of his career.

Despite Vishniac's impressive output, only 250 of his pictures were published

in his lifetime. 'Roman Vishniac Rediscovered' is the first UK retrospective of his work, and goes some way to redressing the balance. 'This is just the tip of the iceberg,' says Benton. 'I don't see this as the final word on Vishniac. I see this as an opening up of the archive inviting people to mine it'.



Also out now

The latest and best books from the world of photography



© MOLLY BEHAGS

Obsolete & Discontinued

By various, edited by Mike Crawford, Brovira Press, £30, 128 pages, 978-1916450707



In 2015 photographer and printer Mike Crawford was gifted several hundred sheets of old, outdated photographic paper by a client clearing out his late uncle's possessions. Having run a print studio and darkroom for more than 25 years he was well aware that such paper has a limited shelf life, and once this has been exceeded it can become discoloured, lose contrast, and suffer from fogging. Most people would have received the boxes with a smile and then swiftly binned them, but Mike was curious and so he asked 60 photographers and artists to use the paper as a basis to produce new work. *Obsolete & Discontinued* is the result of this mammoth collaboration. Portraits, landscapes and abstractions all feature, and the techniques used range from photograms to composites and the use of bodily fluids. My only complaint is that I want to learn more about the pictures and the processes behind them, but perhaps the mystery is all part of the pleasure. The book is available directly from Mike Crawford via www.obsolete-discontinued.com. ★★★★★ **Tracy Calder**

St Kilda: The Silent Islands

By Alex Boyd, Luath Press, £20, 192 pages, hardback, 978-1910745649



The austere beauty of St Kilda, a small volcanic archipelago 41 miles west of Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides, has been well documented. Landscape and documentary photographer Alex Boyd is not afraid to document the scars, military buildings and radar domes scattered around St Kilda, but he balances this out with images of the archipelago's astonishing natural beauty. Many of the black & white images were shot on a medium-format camera that once belonged to Fay Godwin and, Boyd admits, he turned to her work both for guidance and as a point of departure. *St Kilda: The Silent Islands* is not a guidebook – nor was it intended to be – but it does deliver an incredible sense of place. ★★★★★ **Tracy Calder**



Viewpoint Tracy Calder

Whether you collect records, photographic prints, or even traffic cones, the objects you surround yourself with can have a big impact on your creative work

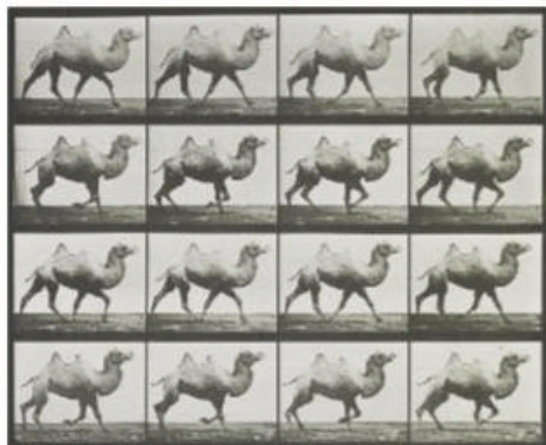
According to psychologist and author Christian Jarrett, roughly a third of people in the UK collect something. From traffic cones to old bars of soap (yes, really) it appears we get a kick out of filling our spare bedrooms with ephemera. Over the past 40 years I have collected shells, records (specifically 12in picture discs), postcards, old letters, magazines and, of course, photographs. Admittedly, my enthusiasm for many of these collections has been short-lived. The vinyl has been sold, the letters binned, and the boxes of shells and postcards found a new home in my parents' loft (thanks Mum and Dad).

However, two of my collections are still 'active'. The fact that I still love, and collect, magazines and photographs is no surprise; I've worked in the photo publishing industry for more than 20 years after all. But with the opening of the V&A's Photography Centre on 12 October (the V&A began collecting photographs in 1852) it got me thinking about other photographers and their collections.

Varied collections

Magnum photographer Martin Parr has an international reputation for his varied (and occasionally odd) collections. Tate acquired his 12,000-strong photobook collection in 2017, but that still leaves him with an impressive collection of Saddam Hussein watches, a vast amount of Margaret Thatcher memorabilia, and an eclectic mix of holiday souvenirs and postcards. The wonderful Walker Evans amassed and catalogued some 9,000 picture postcards during his lifetime, most of them featuring ordinary American street scenes. His obsession was such that he occasionally sent a card to a friend and then asked for it back to add to his collection!

What I find so fascinating is that these collections have clearly influenced Evans's and Parr's work. 'What Evans loved about these cards was that they showed plain, direct views of places and things,' says Liz Jobey in *The Guardian*. This can be seen in his photographs of shop fronts,



Above: This collotype print entitled 'Camel Trotting' comes from Eadweard Muybridge's *Animal Locomotion* series, and is one of many images 'collected' by the V&A

advertisements and street scenes. Likewise, Parr's love of ephemera is echoed in his image making where he seems to 'collect' food, selfies and landmarks.

Then there are photographers who collect photographic prints. David Hurn is a great example. Earlier this year I saw his exhibition David Hurn's Swaps (curated by Parr) at The Photography Show in Birmingham. Hurn has been a collector of photographs since 1958 when he happened to be in Trafalgar Square photographing pigeons at the same time as Chilean photographer Sergio Larraín. The two became friends and Larraín gifted Hurn a print of his work. Hurn then began swapping prints with artists he admired. His collection comprises more than 600 pictures from the likes of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Elliott Erwitt and Philip Jones Griffiths. Forming such a collection cannot fail to have influenced his work. Hurn developed many friendships through his print exchange and in the run up to the Swaps exhibition he told Magnum, 'I have never chosen a print that has not enriched my life.' This, I think, sums up the pure joy of collecting. When you collect you make an investment - for some this is financial, but for others it's emotional. For me, that's where the real value lies.

Tracy Calder has more than 20 years of experience in the photo magazine industry. She is the co-founder of Close-up Photographer of the Year, visit www.cupoty.com.

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 28 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

In next week's issue

On sale Tuesday 11 December



Control the light

Lighting doesn't have to be a headache. Tim Clinch shares his expertise



Fujifilm XF10

An APS-C sensor in pocketable form? We see if the XF10 is too good to be true

Rising Stars 2018

How to achieve your dream: six photographers share their tips

Panorama stitching

Martin Evening shows you how to use Photoshop's panorama-building feature



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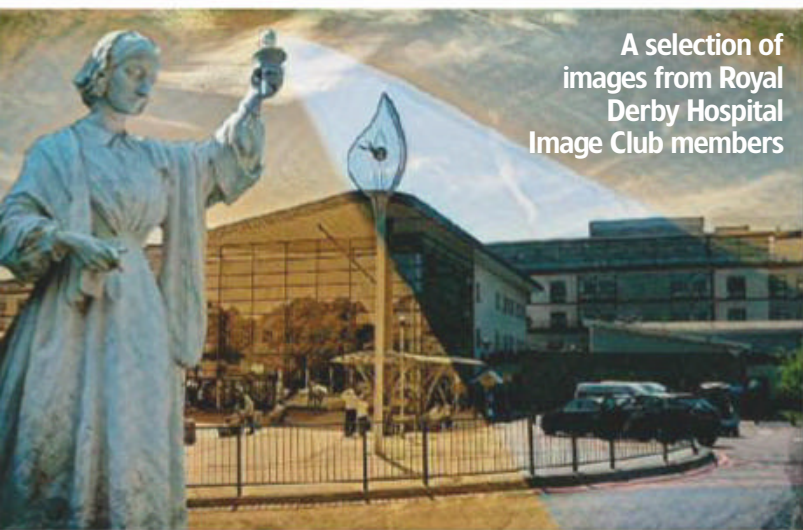
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A selection of images from Royal Derby Hospital Image Club members

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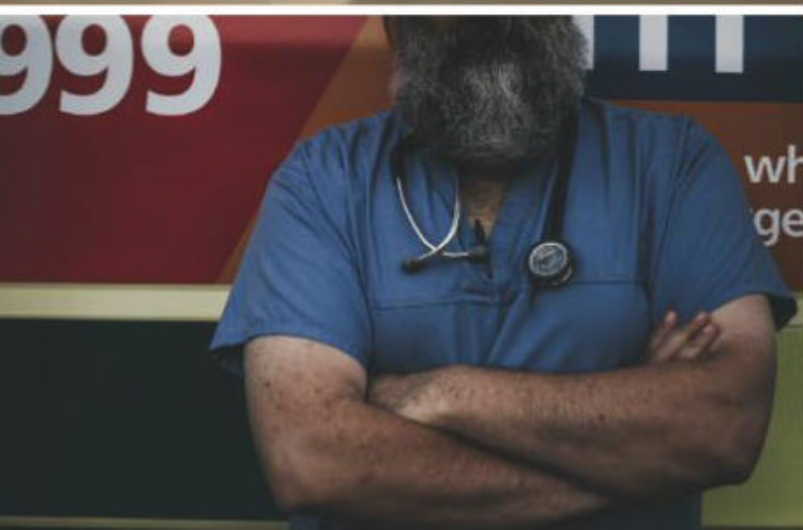


An RDH club day out to the Peak District

© RDH



© ANNA CLAPHAM



© MON KASHEB ELEN

Join the Club

Royal Derby Hospital Image Club

Derby

This week we focus on a special club for NHS staff members

When was the club founded?

In 2016 visual artist/photographer Valerie Dalling was commissioned by Air Arts to work with members of staff on a number of creative approaches to photography workshops, with the intention of offering staff an introduction to a leisure interest in their place of work.

As a result of the positive feedback received following the workshops, she was invited back in 2017 to set up and facilitate a monthly photo forum.

What does the club offer new members?

The group is non-competitive, and it enables staff to meet through a friendly and relaxing monthly social activity. All members of staff and volunteers who attend the group have extremely important and caring roles to play within the hospital, and one of the members summed it up by saying, 'So many things in the world use up your time and energy, but Image Club is pure pleasure'.

Describe a typical club meeting.

Everyone is encouraged to participate, share images and the stories behind them, and help each other when questions arise. But above all, the aim is to relax and enjoy their interest together.

Do you invite guest speakers?

As a relatively new and small self-funded group, professionals have been very supportive. They include the wonderful John Blakemore who brought along beautiful black & white prints from the darkroom; Chris Upton, who took us on a trip around the world through framing and composition; Caroline Bridges, who along with daughter Chloe as her model provided a practical evening of portraiture and lighting; and Rob Knight of RK Photographic, who spoke about working on projects in preparation for exhibitions.

Do members compete in regional or national competitions?

A number of members have entered competitions outside of the club and some have been successful in having their work published.

How many members do you have?

In this current year, there are 15 members and interestingly, unlike many photography clubs, male members are slightly outnumbered by female members.

Are any trips or outings planned?

Members are keen to socialise, and there have been trips to exhibitions at both Quad and Derby Museums, photography field trips in the Peak District, and there's much more in the pipeline.

Are there any funny tales about the club?

Laughter is high on the list of priorities for the club. The first time members went up into the Peak District for a day of photography together, a very happy day was had by all and while there isn't really a funny story attached to it as such, there were some great shots of each other, with some members now being known for their 'coffee stops', a 'thing for green', and 'a master of shadows' when it comes to a day out with their cameras.

What are the club's goals for the future?

This year the group are delighted to have been allocated permanent exhibition space at the Royal Derby Hospital, where seven members of the Club will be showing work together as part of the current Air Arts Seventy exhibition, celebrating 70 years of the NHS.

This lovely group is excited for the future growth of their club and look forward to welcoming colleagues along to join them in the future.

Valerie Dalling recently set up a second photography group for members of NHS staff at the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield, and with the full support and approval of the Arts Programmes from both Derby and Sheffield, one of the goals is to see a development of exciting projects and exhibitions forging links between the hospitals, their staff and the two cities.

Club essentials

Meets Usually the last Wednesday of the month at the Royal Derby Hospital. 4pm-6pm venue is always confirmed.

Membership £5 per session paid half yearly, includes refreshments. First visit complimentary.

Contact laura@airarts.net or valeriedalling@mac.com.

Website: www.airarts.uk/get-involved/

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Technique BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

Shooting in the winter months means you don't have to wake up at a ridiculous hour
Nikon D850, 400mm, 1/1600sec at f/4, ISO 2500



KIT LIST

▼ Binoculars

I always carry my binoculars with me as they are much lighter than my camera set-up and clearer to look through than a viewfinder, so are invaluable for finding subjects to photograph.



Telephoto lens ▼

A lens of at least 300mm will be required. I use a Nikon 400mm f/2.8, and I often add converters to get extra reach. Using a camera with a cropped sensor is a cheaper way to increase your lens's magnification as well.



Spare batteries ▼

In the cold batteries don't last as long, so it's always worth having a few spares with you. Try to keep them as warm as possible, so put them in pockets near your body to preserve them.



Winter wings

With low sunlight, as well as the prospect of frost and snow, winter is a great time to be out looking for birds to photograph, says **Oscar Dewhurst**

Oscar Dewhurst



Oscar Dewhurst is an award-winning wildlife photographer from London and has photographed a wide range of subjects all over the world. He is currently studying for a Biology Research Master's at Durham University. To find out more, visit www.oscardewhurst.com.

Winter is a great time for bird photography. The low sun means you can photograph throughout the day, and the prospect of frost and snow should make any wildlife photographer lick their lips. At this time of the year, many birds look fantastic in bright plumage, having come through a moult at the end of the breeding season. The harsh weather conditions and subsequent difficulty in finding food means they can be more approachable, and handouts can be used to attract them. Perhaps my favourite thing about photographing in winter, however, is that sunrise is at a much more respectable time, so you don't need to drag yourself out of bed at a ridiculously early hour.

During winter, the angle of the sun is low throughout the day, meaning you are freer to shoot in the middle of the



Give some thought to your subject's background
Nikon D850, 400mm 2x, 1/640sec at f/7, ISO 3200

ALL PICTURES © OSCAR DEWHURST

Warm clothes ►

These are essential for me. Sitting still in the cold is harder than just being out in it, and if you are wrapped up warm you will be able to stay out longer.



Gloves ►

A good pair of gloves is invaluable for photography in winter. Many photographers go for two pairs: a thin pair underneath and a thicker pair on top. When using the camera, remove the outer pair to leave a pair that still allows you to operate camera controls.



Tripod leg wraps ▼

The legs of a tripod can get very cold. Putting foam leg wraps around them prevents this from happening, and your hands won't freeze when carrying it around.



‘Shooting at this time of the year, when the sun is nearer the horizon, means you can experiment with different light angles too’

➤ day without worrying about harsh light and loss of details in shadow and highlight areas, as would occur in summer. Despite this, I would still recommend trying to be out for sunrise, as the quality of light is still better, and bird activity levels are higher. They need to feed to replenish energy resources lost overnight. Shooting at this time (or towards sunset), when the sun is nearer the horizon, means you can experiment with different light angles too. Side lighting and backlighting can be very effective, and you’ll capture images that will stand out from others. Heavy frost and backlighting, in particular, is a great combination.

Watch the weather

Nearly all wildlife photographers I know will be hoping for frost and snow in which to shoot over the winter. Watch the weather forecasts and plan accordingly. Frost will often disappear soon after the sun hits it, so you may need to be out early to take advantage of this. Snow is another aspect that makes me look forward to winter, although again it’s important to plan ahead and pick one species to focus

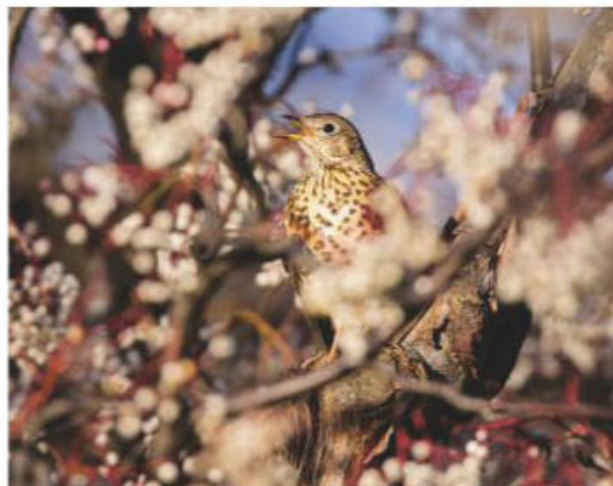
on. Otherwise it’s easy to end up rushing around trying to photograph everything when it does come, which can result in a few mediocre images. It’s much better to focus on something, and end up with just a couple of good images.

In snowy conditions, local knowledge can be invaluable. Travelling further afield can be risky, particularly if road conditions are dangerous. Having good local knowledge also means you will have

an increased chance of getting images as you will know what you can find, and where. During the heavy snowfall in London at the start of 2013, I headed straight to where I knew I would find foxes, as I had been photographing them for the previous few months. It can be very dispiriting to have fantastic conditions but no subject in which to photograph them, so working out where you will go in advance is definitely worth it.



BIRDS TO LOOK OUT FOR DURING WINTER



Winter thrushes

Winter brings with it the arrival of migrant thrushes such as redwing and fieldfare to the UK from northern Europe. They congregate in groups, feeding in open grassy areas or on berry trees. You may be lucky enough to have them visiting your garden, in which case throw some apples out for them, and lie in wait.



Wildlife in snow

If you are lucky enough to have some decent snowfall, it can make for fantastic images. Snow declutters the landscape entirely, and leaves the option of capturing high-key images of birds against clean white backgrounds. Cold snaps also bring more birds into gardens, giving you opportunities to control your images more.

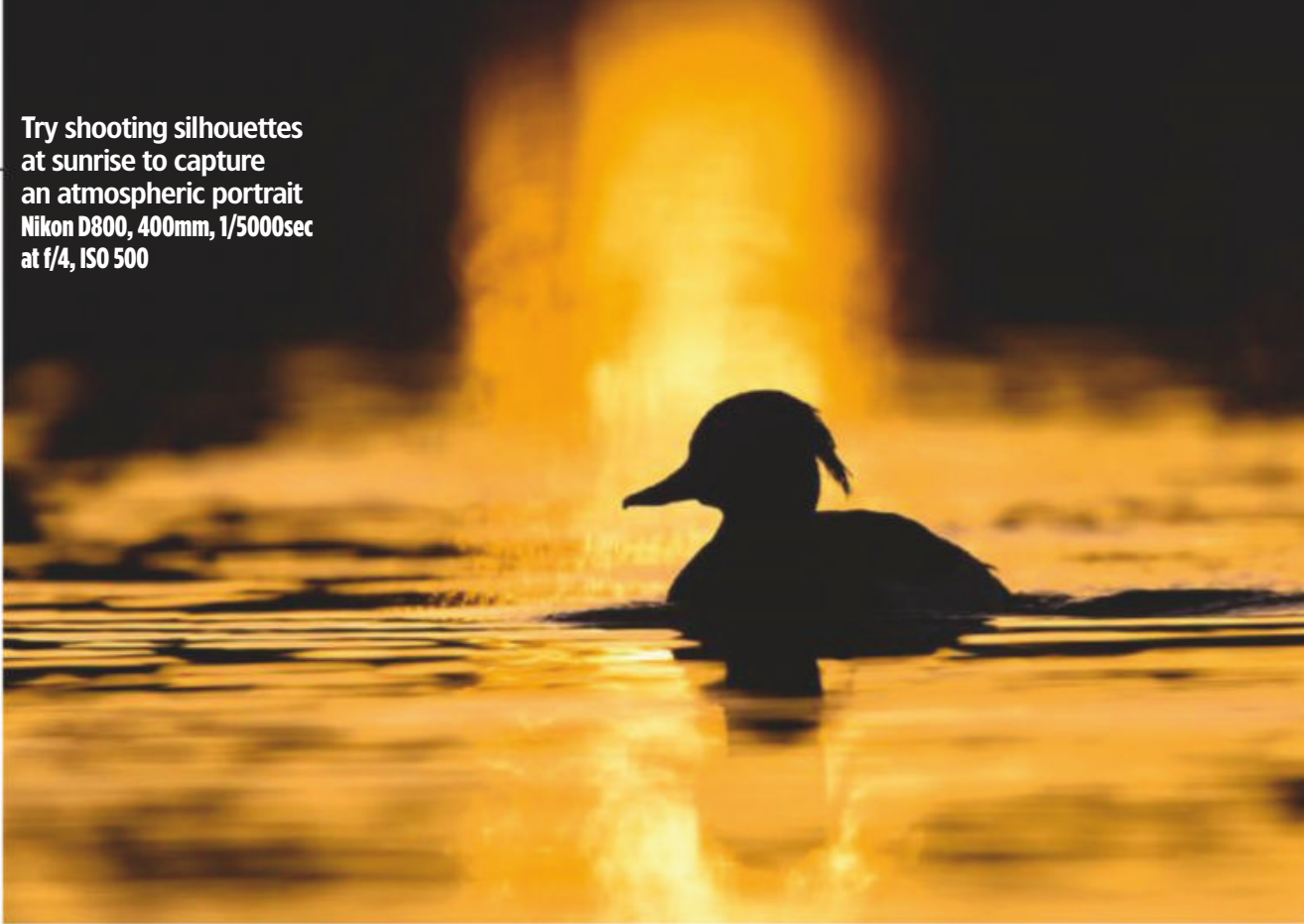


Waxwings

Waxwings are a favourite of mine, on account of their gaudy plumage and tolerance to a close approach from people. Their numbers vary year on year and they’re wonderful birds to photograph. Check local stands of berry trees, the twitter account @WaxwingsUK and your local bird-sightings page.



In snowy conditions, head to a local area where you know you'll find suitable subjects to photograph
Nikon D850, 400mm, 1/1250sec at f/6.3, ISO 2000



Try shooting silhouettes at sunrise to capture an atmospheric portrait
Nikon D800, 400mm, 1/5000sec at f/4, ISO 500

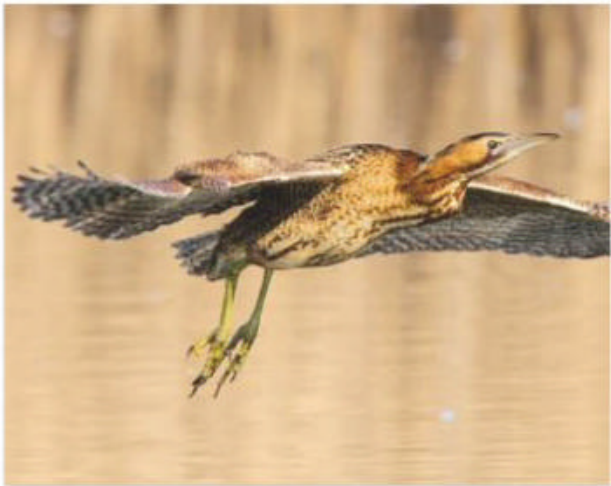


Make the most of frosty conditions before the sun rises Nikon D800, 400mm, 1/2500sec at f/8, ISO 640

➤

Camera settings

For most wildlife photography, I use aperture priority, my fastest frame rate and single spot autofocus. I have found this combination to work best for me, but others will have their own preferences. In some cases, however, I will modify these, such as when shooting in snow. Being very light, a camera exposing for snow can result in an underexposed subject. There are two ways to rectify this.



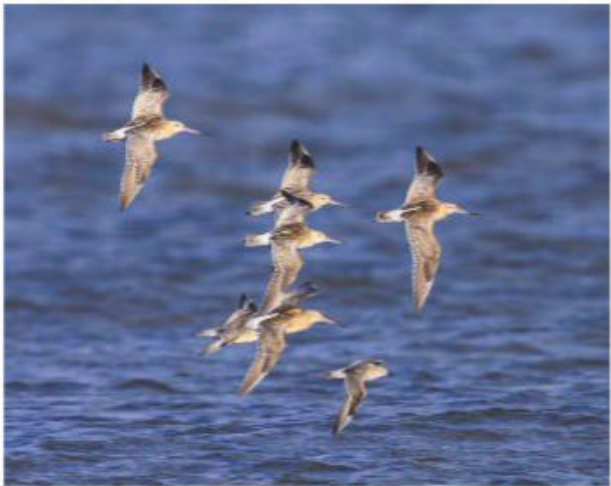
Bitterns

The bittern is one of our rarest and most secretive birds. UK numbers are bolstered by the arrival of migrant birds from continental Europe in the winter. They feed in reed beds, and in cold conditions often become more visible as they are forced into the open to look for food sources elsewhere.



Wildfowl

Drakes will be in their finest plumage, as the breeding season starts. There's plenty of opportunity to shoot winter migrants, such as wigeon and teal, as well as those that are resident all year round. Slimbridge Wildlife and Wetland Trust in Gloucestershire, has huge flocks of ducks, as well as geese and swans.



Waders

The coast is a great spot in winter, with the large number of wader species that feed and roost there. Snettisham Nature Reserve in Norfolk has spectacular phenomena at high tide when huge flocks of birds are pushed off the mudflats, but most of the coastline in the UK will have waders.



Top tips for photographing garden birds

Put feeders out

Winter is the best time to feed your garden birds. Put some feeders out with a variety of foods, such as sunflower hearts, peanuts and niger seeds (goldfinches love these).

Position perches

Once you have birds regularly coming to your feeders, position some perches nearby so they will land there on their approach, or while waiting for the feeder to become free.

Backgrounds

When positioning perches, think about what background you want, and adjust accordingly. If you cannot get a clear background, you could consider using an artificial background such as a print out of muted green or other colours.

Use seasonal props

There are a huge range of perches you can use, from various branches, to more artificial items like watering cans and garden tools. Be creative.

Think about light

Try to position yourself so the early-morning sun will be over your shoulder, showing off your subject perfectly.

Experiment with light

Try shooting into the sun too, for dramatic results that are a bit different.

Wideangle lens

A remote release and wideangle lens can give a different perspective, showing the birds in the context of their environment.

Tripod

Place your camera on a tripod and be ready in an instant when birds appear at your set-up.

Bird behaviour

Understanding bird behaviour will help improve your images. Make sure your perches fit with the subject's natural behaviour, to keep your images looking natural.

First, you could use spot metering, so the camera will meter off wherever your focus point is. The other option is to use manual exposure, whereby you take an exposure reading off something else neutral, such as grass or trees, and dial that in. Make sure you check the resulting images on the back of the camera, as well as the histogram, so you end up with the correct exposure. Obviously if shooting in this mode and the light changes, you will need to change your exposure manually. I often tend to overexpose images slightly in snow to get the subject correct, and then dial back the brightness of the snow in post-production.

Image variety

You can capture a huge range of images of birds in winter. Many birds have recently come through their post-breeding moult, so can look fantastic as they start to think about courtship and displaying to attract a mate. As well as the traditional frame-filling images of birds, consider making images that show more context. Winter landscapes can be very pretty, and images

showing wildlife in its beautiful winter environment can be quite evocative. They are harder to capture than frame-fillers, but are well worth the effort when it comes off, and can be far more memorable.

Ethics

I mentioned this in June when I wrote about photographing birds in the summer (*Birds of summer*, AP 16 June), but it applies all year round. In addition to the issues I raised then, about aspects such as baiting (both live and non-live), captive subjects and digital manipulation, it is worth remembering that winter is often a hard time for wildlife, particularly when temperatures drop below freezing, with scarce food resources, and birds are ultimately fighting to survive. Therefore, be mindful not to flush them out or disturb them in your photography, as this is wasted energy that will need to be replenished. When approaching subjects, check for any signs of distress, and retreat if you think you are disturbing them. The welfare of the subject should always come first.



Why it works

A FEW years ago, I spent part of the winter photographing cormorants in one of the London parks. Despite not being the most glamorous location in which to photograph wildlife, one advantage is that birds are often more used to people here, so it is easier to get within photographic range. Fortunately, these cormorants were largely unconcerned by my presence, and I had a few very productive sessions with them. They spent a lot of time fishing up and down the water, at times very close to me. I had chosen my spot as it was

underneath a bridge, so to expose the bird correctly, the water appeared almost jet-black in photos, and subjects stood out really well. One image I was very keen to capture was the moment a bird surfaced. Cormorants hunt for fish underwater, and when they come back up, the water runs off their face. It all happens pretty quickly though, so I had to be fast. Eventually I reacted well enough to capture this bird at the perfect moment; that it happened to be looking straight down the lens was a real bonus.



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Twists of fate

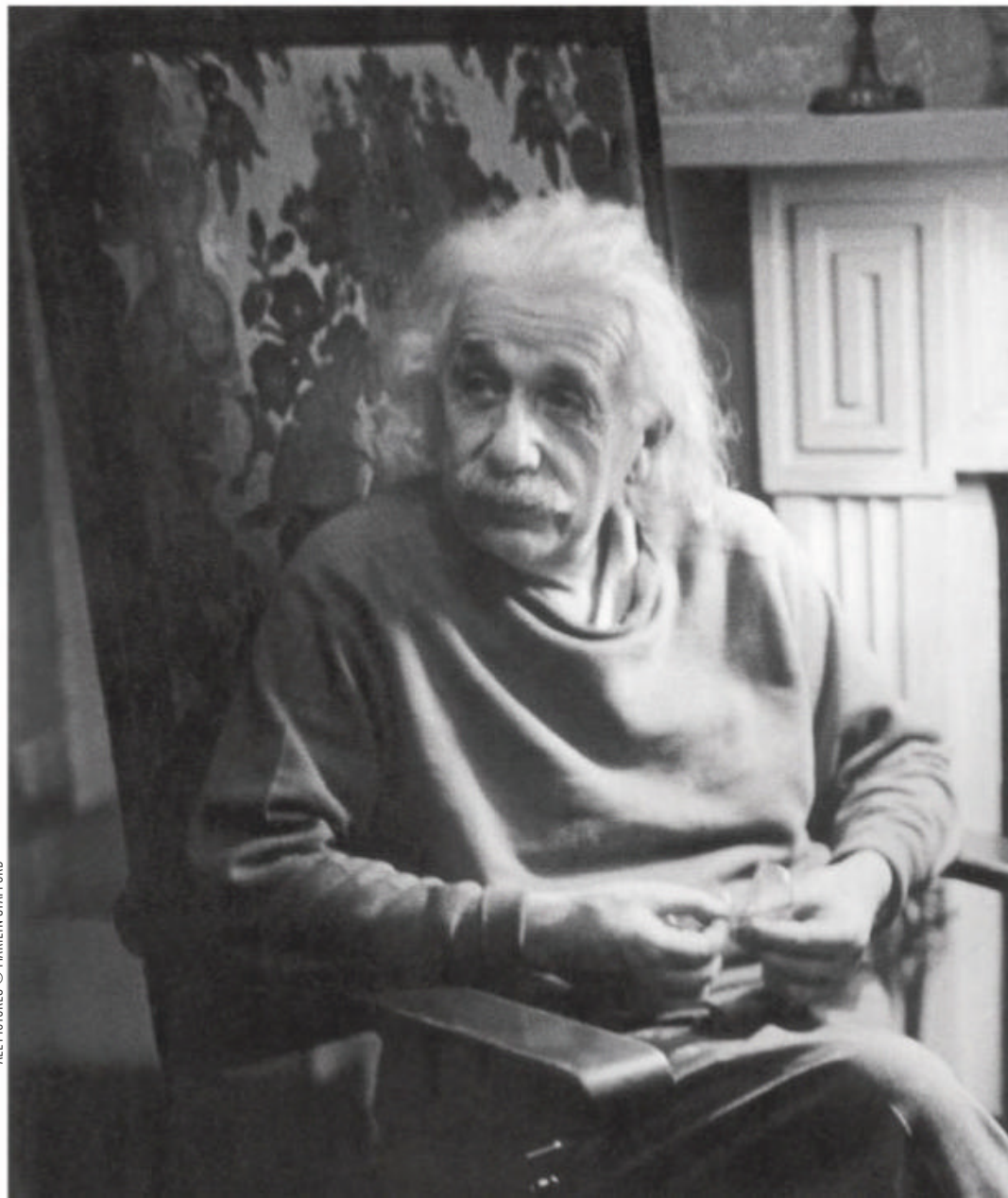
The life and career of Marilyn Stafford has been a series of fortunate, and sometimes bizarre events, as **Amy Davies** discovers

Marilyn Stafford's talk at this year's Hull International Photography Festival (HIPFest) was one of the highlights of the show. After watching the 93-year-old legend of photography command the stage like a woman half her age, if not younger, it was further privilege to sit down with the inspirational figure for a chat.

Considering Stafford didn't really want to be a photographer

– harbouring early ambitions to be a 'great American actress' – the Ohio native has had an extraordinary career. Now living near Brighton, her life and work seem to have followed a serendipitous path of incredible opportunities.

Amazingly, it all started with a photograph of none other than Albert Einstein. Having a camera thrust into her hand on the car journey over to Einstein's house in New Jersey, where he was working



Left: On the car ride over to Albert Einstein's house, Stafford was shown how to use the 35mm camera which captured this portrait – it was to become her first professional picture

in 1948 at the Ivy League Princeton University, it would be Stafford's first professional photograph, and one which she is still asked about.

'I was simply handed a 35mm camera,' she recalls, 'which I'd never used before – I'd always used a Rolleiflex, which is a bigger camera with a bigger frame. With the 35mm you looked through the viewfinder in a completely different way so it was a totally different method. I was



just given the camera in the back seat of this car and was told, “You are going to be the stills lady – we will set the lighting and do everything for you, all you have to do is look through the lens, focus it and click the button.” And that’s what I did – I listened to directions... that’s how I took Albert Einstein’s photograph.’

In 1949, Stafford headed for Paris. Here her life would

dramatically change, and her photographic career would begin in earnest some years later. ‘One of the stories I love is that I went to Paris because of the infidelity of a man,’ she says. Cutting a long story short, the trip was the demand of a friend, whose husband had cheated and forced the guilty party to pay up for the duo’s jaunt across the Atlantic. Were it not for this twist of fate, we may not actually have

Above:
Photographing
models on the
streets of Paris
in the new ‘ready
to wear’ clothing
of the era was
pioneering at
the time

the Stafford archive to look back on at all.

Photography was not the first career Stafford embarked on once in Europe, however. During her early days there she had various jobs including singing at a dinner club on the Champs-Élysées. It was here that she would meet Robert Capa – who she refers to as ‘Bob’. ‘I became his “little sister”, and he would come in every night with his chums and we would talk,’ she reminisces.

The next step

Sadly, the singing career was not to be after Stafford was told that she’d never make it professionally owing to a problem with her vocal chords. In the end, it was getting a new pet cat that would start her new career. As she explains, ‘I was with friends and I happened to mention I wanted a cat. Somebody said they knew someone with a litter – an American woman who was a fascinating lady. I remained friends with her until her death a few years ago.

‘She was from Texas and was one of the early journalists who had come over during the Second World War. She went round in a jeep all over Europe when it was being bombed to death, writing stories. I didn’t have any work at the time, and I didn’t know what to do. She asked me if I’d like to take some pictures with her – and so I did. She also helped me get a job with a PR agency who had clients in fashion.’

In the 1950s, a new type of ready-to-wear fashion was becoming much more prominent than the haute couture of previous decades. As such, Stafford’s approach to photographing these clothes was unique for the time. She pioneered the idea of taking pictures of women wearing garments in the street – as they might wear them in real life – and used the opportunity to explore her new home in Paris.

‘I was thinking, I don’t like to shoot in a studio – I can’t be bothered with the technology of all of that – the cords, the electricity, lights and organising. I don’t like flash because I can’t figure that out either. So I just thought natural daylight, that’s easy.

‘Because I was still exploring Paris, I just took them [the models] out into my favourite spots in Paris and had fun. I was exploring while I was taking the pictures.’

Such expeditions opened up opportunities to shoot other documentary projects,



➤ something which Stafford had a passion for, and would go on to specialise in. She remembers, ‘Something quite memorable was getting off at the Bastille and finding myself in a rather derelict, once beautiful, Edwardian centre of town which had become a slum.

‘I was just wandering around and suddenly some kids popped up and started following me – when they pop up, they bring life to the whole thing. I photographed all of them, had a marvellous time and left. I later realised that I was in the worst slum in Paris – it was eventually taken down by the government in 1984 and is now the site of the Opéra Bastille opera house.

‘What’s exciting is that those pictures were shown in an exhibition in Toronto, and they’re on my website – things converge and the people who I photographed, the kids, are coming forth and saying, “That’s me.”’

In the mid ’50s, Stafford married a British foreign correspondent based in Paris. While heavily pregnant with their daughter, she travelled to Tunisia to document Algerian refugees. On returning to Paris, she showed the work to another friend – one Henri Cartier-Bresson, no less – who sent the photos off to *The Observer*. With two images published on the cover, this became Stafford’s first front-page feature, and a pivotal point in her career.

Pushing boundaries

Being a young woman working in a male-dominated industry, especially at the time, had its own challenges. She would later move to London. She recalls an incident, not long after she had moved to the UK. ‘I went to a fashion show – I got there early and took my place and waited for the other photographers. The men came and one guy stood on one side of me, and another stood on the other. As the photographers kept coming in, these two blokes next to me started edging me out, very strongly. Two German photographers, standing on the other side of the runway, got up and walked across it – they said menacingly, “That’s not the way you treat a woman”.’

‘I’m terribly sad to say, I’ve been pushed and shoved, pretty badly. When I’ve been crouching for a shot, I’ve been knocked over, off-balance, and hurt, physically.’

Although Stafford says that these days it’s easier for women to pursue



a career in photography, including photojournalism, she believes the odds are still stacked against them. ‘You will find that they are often paid less than men, and they often have the additional situation of family and children,’ she explains. ‘Either they make a sacrifice and don’t have family, or if they do, because by and large the culture is that the man is the provider, she’s left having to solve the problem, having to cope with everything – including her own work.’

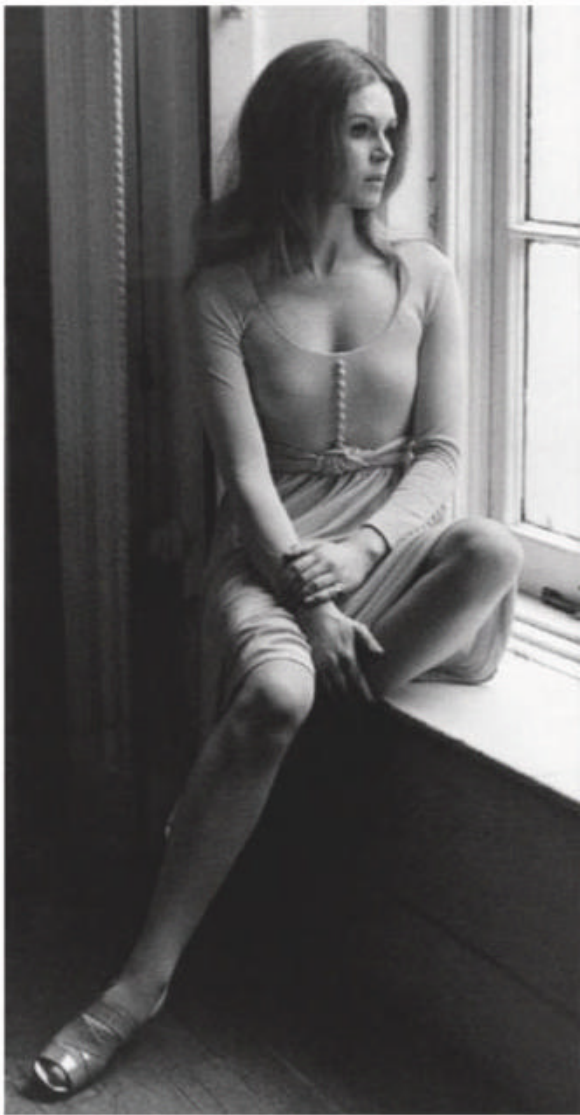
These days, Stafford doesn’t take pictures. She gave up photography when it went digital. But her role, especially for women, continues to be as important as ever, having set up the Marilyn Stafford FotoReportage Award in 2017 in association with FotoDocument and supported by Olympus.

‘The object was to give a small amount of money to a woman who was working on a project of social relevance, and to show a solution to the problem, or at least what was being done to help along toward a solution. There were over 60



Marilyn Stafford was born in Ohio, Cleveland, USA, in 1925. She spent many years working as a photojournalist and fashion photographer in Europe. She now lives in on the South Coast of the UK. For more information on her fascinating life and career, visit www.marilynstaffordphotography.com.

Right: Joanna Lumley wearing Jean Muir, photographed in London in 1970





applicants from all over the world, all of them brilliant photographers. These are women who are caring and deserve to have their stories told. It just tells you when you're sitting by yourself, plotting away, you're not alone – we're with you.'

This year, the Award received extra sponsorship from Olympus, doubling the prize money, as well as making an exhibition of the winners and runners-up a possibility.

For a woman whose career started by photographing Einstein, counted Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa among her friends and went on to take portraits of some of the most famous women (and men) in the world – Stafford remains incredibly humble and self-effacing. Indeed, a gasp rippled through the room when she admitted to throwing some of her archive away. 'I thought nobody would be interested,' she says.

Luckily for us, a large bulk of it remains for us to digest and enjoy – we'd highly recommend that you spend some time getting to know it too.



Above: An interesting scene taking place at BIBA – notice the woman ironing in the background, and the two dogs in the middle of the floor

Top right: A child plays on the streets of Paris in one of Europe's worst slums in the 1950s

Right: Stafford photographed Algerian refugees in 1958 – she would show the resulting pictures to her friend Henri Cartier-Bresson, in a career-defining moment



Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them

1



Fokrul Islam



In 2005, 38-year-old Fokrul Islam bought his first DSLR, a Nikon D70, to take pictures of his family. These days however he finds himself shooting different subjects. He works in IT, which he describes as a technical industry with little scope for creativity – photography provides him with a creative outlet. Living in London, he loves shooting the London skyline during the golden and blue hours of the day. He says, 'The city can look absolutely stunning at these times (if there is good weather). The views along the River Thames are a particular favourite of mine.'

London Eye

1 Taken just before 4am, Fokrul positioned himself on Westminster Bridge to capture this beautiful shot, which is actually four shots stacked together. Sony A7 II, 27mm, 10sec (x4) at f/11, ISO 100

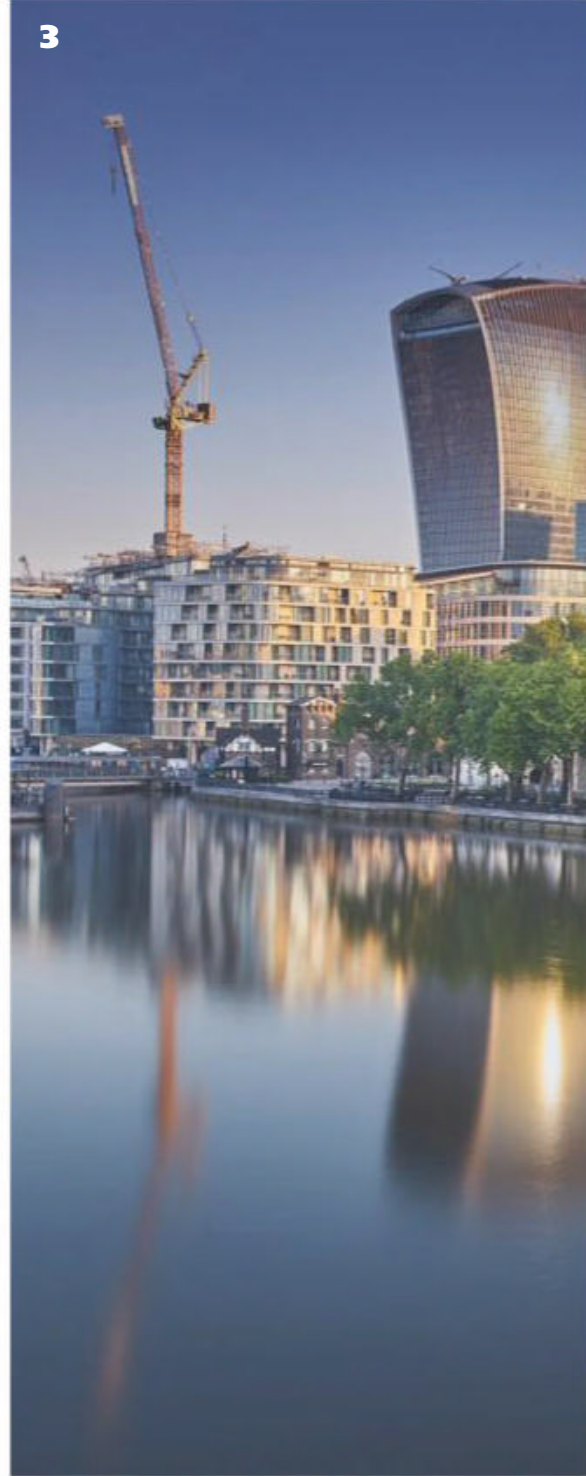
Tower Bridge

2 Taken from Wapping, this unusual view of Tower Bridge is a combination of 128 short exposures merged together. Fokrul was aiming for a perfect reflection. Sony A7 II, 21mm, 1/40sec (x128) at f/11, ISO 100

2



3



4





Manfrotto The Reader Portfolio

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Tower of London

3 This shot is 128 shots stacked together. It was taken from Tower Bridge, and was a scene Fokrul stumbled across after a frustrating morning shooting elsewhere. Sony A7 II, 35mm, 1/13sec (x128 shots) at f/11, ISO 50, tripod, 10-stop ND grad, 0.9 hard grad

Docklands View

5 This scene is just a 5-minute drive from Fokrul's home. It was taken from a cul-de-sac in London's Docklands, and shows the O2 Arena in Greenwich. Sony A7R II, 35mm, 4sec (x128) at f/11, ISO 100



The Shard

4 At the time Fokrul took this shot, he recalls pedestrians stopping in their tracks to take in the view and click pictures on their phones. The near-perfect symmetry and stillness afforded by the water was unlike anything he'd ever seen before when shooting the Thames. Sony A7R II, 35mm, 1/13sec (x128) at f/11, ISO 50



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LETTER OF THE WEEK



Rob used polish and a felt polishing wheel to remove the scratches on his Moto G4's lens



Smartphone DIY

I've read with interest the recent letters and articles in AP about the growing abilities and complexities of smartphone cameras. I have been very grateful to have the facility to take pictures with my Motorola Moto G4 smartphone when I am caught without my beloved Olympus OM-D E-M5 Mark II.

I have recently been concerned that the images captured by my phone were becoming less sharp, and after initially wondering if it was just my deteriorating eyesight (Anno Domini-related) I took a closer look at the lens cover and was amazed to see a layer of fine scratches on the surface, which were the obvious culprits for my blurred images. I was surprised by this as I never carry rough objects in the same pocket as my phone.

Microfibre cloths, alcohol wipes and detergents failed to shift the marks. Not wanting to consign my phone to 'Lomo-esque' images I took the gamble of using some liquid metal polish and a felt polishing wheel and thankfully managed to restore a smooth finish. Now my images look crisp again.

This experience made me look critically at these impressive looking multi-lensed smartphones which all seem to have unprotected lenses which, like mine, protrude from the phone case. I can't help but feel these are likely to succumb to a similar fate to my own unless protected. I would surely be upset to spend the best part of £1,000 only to find my phone optics less than perfect a few months later.

I wonder if I am alone in my experience or if other readers have similar experiences and have found a protective solution? A trawl of the internet has only revealed replacement lenses for various phones rather than a lens protector.

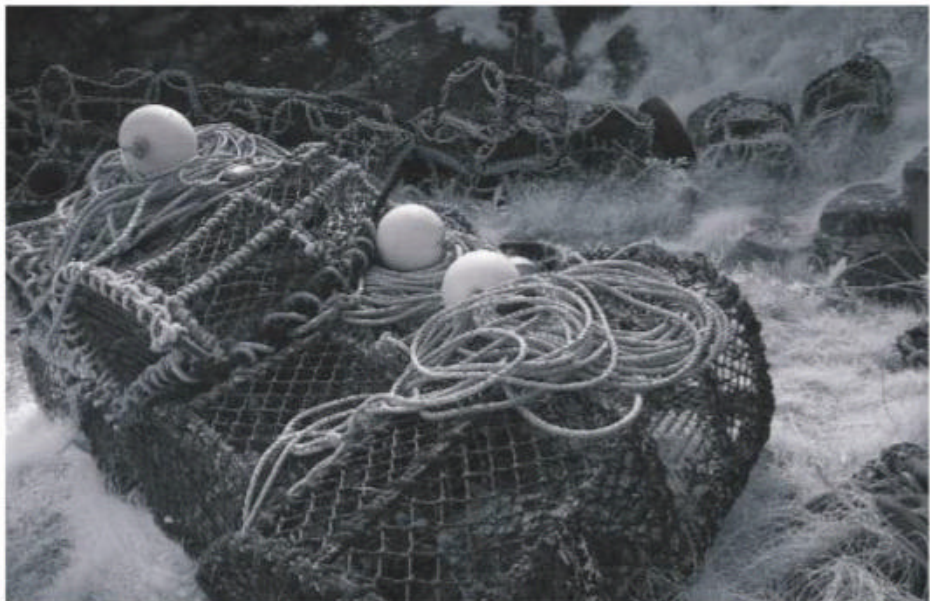
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James took this picture with his infrared-converted Nikon D50

Old cards in new cameras

John Wade's articles are always very well written and illustrated but recently his *Digital Classics* (AP 20 October) was an extra treat. Nigel Atherton asked for readers to write in about their own, favourite early digital camera (*Inbox*, AP 17 November). I like all three of my makes and systems, which are Pentax, Nikon and Lumix. I also use their earlier lenses, now classified as legacy items, on my more modern kit.

If I were to choose a favourite it would be the Nikon D50, which I had converted to a 720nm infrared and so spawned a new direction for my image making as well as giving this 2005 camera a new lease of life. Whilst its CCD six-million-pixel sensor might be laughed at, it does, with decent quality, mid-price range glass, provide me with an enjoyable camera for regular use; I have also printed detailed shots to A4 and beyond, with some interpolation. I also use a D70, which got a good report.

However, there is a hidden element that can inhibit extended use of these cameras and that is a supply of non-HC memory cards. I use both SD and CF cards and today's memory cards will not work in aging equipment. New cards are almost non-existent and are very expensive. Any suggestions on this problem would be gratefully received!

James Duffy

Uncertain future

Nigel Atherton's thought-provoking *Viewpoint* (AP 27 October) suggesting that DSLR days are numbered also prompts some consequential questions about impact. Are we now going to see a flurry of quick offloading

activity among existing users who dislike the idea of having kit rapidly losing value and, perhaps, brand support? And, at what point will makers actually admit that DSLRs are out and mirrorless models are in, albeit in different forms? Creating a mood of uncertainty or disquiet can soon change customer perceptions, often badly.

The recent mirrorless moves by top brands are fair markers about the future, but with countless numbers of DSLRs still in active use, there must be a risk of alienating loyal customers who are content, at least for the time being, to keep what they have.

Gary Jenkins

The loss of a camera's value is only of consequence if you intend to sell it. My D700 was worth peanuts even before Nikon launched its new mirrorless system, so I may as well keep it. But many DSLR owners will trade in for sure, providing tempting bargains for buyers on a tight budget – Nigel Atherton, Editor

The boy in the bath

I recently had a painter and decorator in to do quite a lot of work in our house. He had done odd jobs for us before so I knew him quite well. During one of the many coffee breaks (for both of us) we got chatting about our respective jobs. I clearly knew what he did, but he had no idea what my line of work was, so I explained that I was a picture editor and researcher for a number of magazines.

To which he replied that he was once on the cover of a magazine: *Amateur Photographer*. He was photographed as a 4-year-old kid in the bath! The picture was taken

by his dad, who was a keen amateur photographer himself and had a vast selection of camera equipment and his own darkroom. He sent the photo to the magazine and they decided to run it on the front cover.

I then explained that *Amateur Photographer* is one of the magazines I work on, and this got me thinking. A few emails to the editorial staff and some fantastic research by AP's own studio photographer, Andrew Sydenham, and the 16 December 1964 cover was found, with a young Mike Howard on the front. As you can see by the current image with paint brush in hand (below), he hasn't changed that much. For his day job he now goes by the name of Southend Handyman, and his painting and DIY skills are as good as his father's photography 54 years ago.

Duncan Bond

A great story, Duncan. How times change – I don't think we'd put a picture of a child in the bath on the cover today! – Nigel Atherton, Editor



Southend Handyman appeared on the cover of AP as a child in 1964

EF obsolescence?

The launch of the Canon EOS R worries me a lot. I am old enough to recall how Canon dumped its FD mount users years ago. So you can see why the prospect of yet another lens mount worries me very much. EF, EF-S, M, RF – I bet there will be some disappointed customers out there because I fear that one at least, or maybe some, of these mounts will inevitably be dumped in the not-too-distant future. This in itself does not mean the equipment will cease to function immediately, of course, but the speed with which Canon abandoned support for FD back then is a worrying precedent, don't you think? Repairs and accessories quickly became impossible to obtain. A satisfactory adapter to put FD lenses on EOS (or vice versa) never materialised and I don't see an adapter to put RF lenses on EF or EF-S mount cameras, either. I just hope I am being unduly pessimistic.

Mike Gosling

The switch to the EF mount 30 years ago was probably the best thing Canon ever did. The technological advances it enabled led to Canon's dominance of the DSLR market ever since. If you don't innovate someone else will, and you'll be left behind. Look at Nokia. If there is a demand for such adapters someone will soon fill it – Nigel Atherton, Editor

A polarised opinion

Once again there's an article (*Exposed to perfection*, AP 13 October) praising polarising filters without the warning that they are not suitable for use with some wideangle lenses. After a similar AP article a few years ago I made an expensive mistake and bought one to use with a Sigma 10-20mm lens. It worked as expected at the 20mm setting, but with a shorter focal length the effect became uneven across the sky because of the lens's angle of view.

The article also suggests that if you use screw-in filters 'you can end up with two or more of the same filter type'. Has James Abbot never heard of stepping rings? Just buy one filter of the largest size you need and get a few (very cheap) stepping rings so that it can be used on other lenses with smaller filter threads.

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Luke & Mandy

Luke & Mandy are a creative team who usually work together throughout the photographic process – from planning to editing. However, for the benefit of this article, they talk to us primarily from their perspective as photographer and model. www.lukeandmandy.com

Perfect portraits

A special venue can add an extra dimension to your portrait shoots. Make the most of your surroundings – as well as your time – with these top 15 tips

EARLIER this year, AP headed to the spectacular Eastnor Castle in Herefordshire to join a portrait and fashion masterclass with ZEISS Ambassadors Luke & Mandy. In 2016 the duo started partnering with ZEISS for photo shoots and the relationship quickly evolved into a fully fledged ambassador role by early 2017.

Eastnor Castle provided the perfect setting for the masterclass, and attendees enjoyed the expertise of the creative duo while trying out a wide range of ZEISS optics. Shooting on location is a great way to add variety to your portrait portfolio and, as there's no weather to contend with, ideal for the winter months. Here we share some inspirational tips, with help along the way from Luke & Mandy.

1 Finding suitable locations

Luke: 'We often stumble across something that inspires us. For example, we travelled to Biarritz, southwest France, and got really inspired by the shape of a rock – we have planned a whole shoot around it. We always have our eyes open and inspiration can strike at any moment. We rarely look for something specific; however we have things that we are drawn to, such as textures and reflections.'

2 Visiting ahead of time

Luke: 'We practically never visit locations before we shoot. Unless they are local to us, it just doesn't make sense logistically. Google is our friend! This method also teaches us to be better artists by having to think on the spot. When we used to shoot in abandoned locations, sometimes we would only have 15 minutes inside a place, so we would just have to make it work. We thrive on pressured situations.'

3 Prepare for the shoot

With an on-location portrait shoot, you'll normally find you are against the clock. To maximise time, pre-visualise what you want to achieve. One tip is to use mood boards (you can do this digitally with sites like Pinterest) to gather ideas, which could include poses, hair, make-up and outfit ideas.

4 Paying for shoot locations

When searching for suitable on-location portrait venues, cost can sometimes be an issue. A way to keep the budget low is to 'trade' with the venue – giving them the option to use your photos in return for use of the space. You might not always be successful with this approach, but it's always worth asking.

© LUKE & MANDY. HAIR AND MAKEUP BY ROSIE LEE. DRESS DESIGNER: RUTH WILLIAM COUTURE



Using a wideangle lens helps to show off the surroundings
Sony Alpha 7R III, ZEISS Batis 25mm, 1/10sec at f/2, ISO 125



© LUKE & MANDY



Using elements of the surroundings can really add drama to environmental portraits
Sony Alpha 7R III, ZEISS Batis 40mm, 1/125sec at f/2, ISO 500

5 Brief the team

Luke and Mandy are a married couple, but if you don't happen to be fortunate enough to have a partner who is willing to pose, it's still worth creating a dialogue between you, the model and anybody else working on the shoot. Luke says, 'In our pre-Luke & Mandy days, we would have a phone conversation and usually joint messages between me, the model and hair and make-up. We would all talk about what vibe we were going to create so we are on the same page. It's good to be able to think on the spot, but planning does make life less stressful.'

6 Shoot wide open

Luke: 'I keep the camera in aperture priority and shoot wide open 80% of the time. I'm using ZEISS lenses so I know I don't have to worry about quality when shooting wide open. I invest in the best gear to make life as easy as possible. The easier life is, the more time I can spend on other important things like composition. Exposure compensation is my friend. If a shot is too bright or too dark, I just turn the dial.'

7 Choose the right settings

If you're going to be shooting indoors but want to use only natural light, you may find you need to push your ISO settings. Luke says, 'I like to make life as simple as possible. This is a very subjective topic, but personally, I mostly use natural light. I put the camera on Auto ISO and set the minimum shutter speed at around 1/125sec and a maximum ISO of about 4000, depending on the location. It's important to note which camera I'm using – a Sony Alpha 7R III – so I know how good the quality will be on these settings. I wouldn't always recommend using such a high ISO on older models.'

8 Choose the best lighting for you

Luke: 'Ninety per cent of the time we use natural lighting – it's just our style; we don't like flash. I have nothing against it personally, and it's a great tool for photographers. Coming from a natural/available light style, continuous makes sense to us, as available light is continuous. We like to be able to see everything at all times. Sometimes we shoot with just continuous lighting. Earlier this year we did a shoot in a room that was very dark so it was our only option. We do enjoy switching it up, and the location definitely determines what you do.'

9 Model and location releases

Luke: 'Releases are funny things. They aren't as necessary as people think they are in most situations, but to be honest, it's been so long since I photographed someone else, I'm a bit scared to give the wrong advice. You can't go wrong having a model sign one though. I've never had to get a location permit for a fashion shoot.'

10

Directing the model

Mandy: 'If a shoot is the photographer's concept and they want something specific, by all means direct as much as they need to, but I don't believe it's always necessary. For me it comes down to a mutual respect between model and photographer. As a model it's my job to know how to pose, how different lighting makes me look and how to express different moods. Too much direction can become off-putting – much like it's not the model's job to tell the photographer which camera settings to use. It's great that Luke and I know each other so well and we really respect each other's visions, so we're able to find that balance.'

This creative shot was taken by one of the masterclass attendees



© JAMIE DENNY



© LUKE & MANDY

Planning the looks you want to achieve ahead of the shoot can save time when you're against the clock
Sony Alpha 7R III, ZEISS Batis 25mm, 1/500sec at f/2, ISO 12,800

11 Keep it comfortable

Mandy: 'To me feeling comfortable means

feeling valued on the shoot. There's nothing wrong with sharing your vision, but if a photographer bombards you with poses to do, it can be intimidating. It feels like they don't trust in your ability as a model, which is no good for confidence and just sets the shoot off on a bad tone. Another big thing is just making sure you feel comfortable in general, with your clothes and make-up.'

12 Useful information

Mandy: 'If I'm doing my own hair and

make-up I like to know exactly what the photographer wants so that I can prepare. The same goes for clothing and accessories – it's always helpful to receive a shoot mood board. When Luke and I do a big shoot we usually test hair and make-up the day before. In our experience this makes everything run a lot smoother on the day.'

13 Consider an assistant

Luke: 'Often we use friends because we can trust them. Having an assistant

can be great because it's a chance for them to learn first-hand what happens on a shoot. However, if they don't actually want to help, then it can be detrimental. It's only usually necessary for us if we have lots of clothes. Otherwise we usually stick to just Mandy and me. Our hair and make-up artists are usually awesome and super-helpful, getting involved in the actual shoot too.'

14 15

Use your camera's tools

Luke: 'The eye autofocus on the Alpha 7R III is a dream feature. I try not to get too caught up on camera functions but, to me, this is the best camera feature in the past five years, possibly more. The fact that you can focus on the model's eyeball and just move around the location to select the best composition with the eyeball still in focus is just remarkable.'

Show and tell

Mandy: 'From my experience, I understand why photographers wouldn't always want to show images as they go. However, as a model, it's definitely beneficial to see how everything's looking. There's nothing worse than getting the images back and wishing you'd fixed that bit of hair, or posed slightly differently. It can save a lot of time and frustration to check as you go.'

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Shooting with a 40mm focal length results in a very natural perspective
Sony Alpha 7R III, ZEISS Batis 40mm, 1/40sec at f/2, ISO 1250

© AMY DAVIES

Raise a glass to **ZEISS**

We take a closer look at the Batis 40mm f/2 CF lens, which is designed for Sony full-frame cameras

As part of the masterclass event at Eastnor Castle, AP had the chance to put the brand new ZEISS Batis 40mm f/2 CF lens through its paces, taking advantage

of the surroundings to shoot a selection of portraits with the lens mounted on the Sony Alpha 7R III.

The focal length of 40mm is superb for environmental and on-location portrait shooting

like this. Many photographers prefer this length to the more common 35mm or 50mm, and the Distagon T* 40mm f/2 optic provides a very natural perspective for images and helping to make the most of such a beautiful location.

Unlike many other ZEISS lenses, the Batis 40mm f/2 CF is an autofocus optic, making it ideal for shooting environmental portraits where the model is encouraged to move around the scene to create different poses, expressions and looks.

The lens is not just great for portraits. CF stands for close-focus, with the lens offering a minimum object distance of just 24cm, affording 0.3x magnification. A limiter switch enables focusing over the entire range or restricts it to either infinity to 40cm for everyday shooting, or 50cm-24cm for close-ups.

Like all Batis lenses, the 40mm features an LCD that shows the focus distance and depth of field.

While the lens is rather large for its specification, it balances well with the Sony Alpha 7R III for shooting comfortably handheld. The optical formula utilises 9 elements in 8 groups, with 3 aspheric elements and 4 elements made of special glass with anomalous partial dispersion. In addition, it features a weather-proof construction, accepts 67mm filters and comes supplied with a bowl-shaped lens hood.



The ZEISS Batis 40mm f/2 CF is on sale now, priced at £1,129.99. Look out for a full review of the lens in a future issue of AP.



© AMY DAVIES

Eye-Focus AF keeps your portraits sharp Sony Alpha 7R III, ZEISS 40mm, 1/40sec at f/2, ISO 400

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Top cameras and lenses 2018

Thinking of a camera or lens for Christmas? Here are our picks of the best models on the market, to help you decide which is most suited for you

IF YOU'RE considering buying a new camera or lens for Christmas, either for a loved one or simply to treat yourself, there's such a bewildering degree of choice that it can be difficult to know where to start. Of course you could simply type 'best camera' into a search engine, but the problem is that there's really no such thing. Different cameras work well for different kinds of photography, and what's perfect for one user might be totally unsuitable for another.

In this guide, we've listed our favourite cameras and lenses to help you choose

what's right for you. We've grouped interchangeable-lens cameras according to the type of user they're designed for: professional, enthusiast or beginner. Professional cameras tend to be large, heavy, complex and expensive beasts that offer the ultimate in image quality, autofocus, speed and durability. At the other end of the scale, beginners' models are usually relatively small and light, and designed to be easy to use. Enthusiast models occupy a middle ground, with additional controls and more sophisticated features compared to entry-

level cameras, but lacking the most advanced capabilities that can be seen in their pro-oriented brethren.

Not everyone wants to mess around with swapping lenses of course, so we've also listed our favourite fixed-lens cameras, from small pocket compacts to large bridge-type models with long zoom lenses. Meanwhile for those who do want to explore the creative options that can only be afforded by changing optics, we've listed our favourite lenses from both the camera companies themselves and the various third-party manufacturers.

Ultimately, though, buying a camera is very much about personal preferences. So we'd always recommend visiting your local camera shop and trying out a range of brands and models to find out which suits you best.

Professional cameras

If you're looking for a professional-level camera there's no shortage of models available. Here we look at a selection of durable, robust workhorses



Canon EOS 5D Mark IV

● £3,249 ● www.canon.co.uk

Canon's EOS 5D series has been one of the most popular ranges among enthusiast photographers since its launch in 2005. This version has a 30.4MP full-frame sensor delivering higher dynamic range and superior low-light performance over its predecessor. It's capable of shooting at 7 frames per second, and is one of only a handful of full-frame DSLRs to support 4K video capture. With great build quality and stunning performance, plus Wi-Fi, GPS and touchscreen control, this is one of the most desirable DSLRs available.



Fujifilm X-T3

● £1,349 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

The X-T3 takes everything we loved about the X-T2 and transforms it into an even better performer, capable of blackout-free 30fps burst shooting with superior AF coverage and response. It has the most impressive video spec we've seen from an X-series camera, supporting broadcast-quality 4K/60P 4:2:2 10-bit HDMI output and 4K/60P 4:2:0 10-bit internal recording. And thanks to its 3.69-million-dot EVF and three-way tilt screen you're guaranteed a first-class viewing experience. Quite simply, it's the best APS-C camera ever made.



Leica M10

● £5,699 ● uk.leica-camera.com

The red Leica badge may be a symbol of quality, craftsmanship, and luxury, but the camera it's affixed to is not just a rich man's necklace. Leicas have been the workhorses of some of the world's greatest photojournalists for decades. The M10 series is the latest in the iconic rangefinder line-up, packing in a 24MP sensor, 5fps burst shooting and Wi-Fi. On top of this, the updated M10-P adds in a quieter, more discreet shutter. But that's almost irrelevant – it's the feel of a Leica M and the joy of shooting with it that will sell it to those who can afford one.



Nikon Z 7

● £3,399 ● www.nikon.co.uk

Nikon fans who've been waiting for a serious mirrorless model have finally had their patience rewarded with the superb Z 7. Incredibly refined for a first-generation product, it sports a 45.7MP full-frame sensor that gives stunning image quality under any lighting conditions. In-body, 5-axis image stabilisation keeps shots sharp at slow shutter speeds, while the superb 3.69-million-dot viewfinder gives an accurate preview of how images will turn out. The camera is compatible with F-mount DSLR lenses via the FTZ mount adapter, too.



Nikon D500

● £1,719 ● www.nikon.co.uk

The D500 makes a strong case for being the world's best APS-C DSLR. It has a 20.9MP DX-format CMOS sensor, 10fps burst shooting, an astonishing maximum ISO of 1,640,000, plus 4K UHD video, alongside Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity. As a long-awaited successor to the hugely popular D300, the D500 offers most of the spec of Nikon's full-frame pro DSLRs but with a smaller DX sensor – thus costing less. If you fancy the performance of a pro-DSLR but don't want to have to upgrade all your DX glass, then this is the camera for you.



Nikon D850

● £3,299 ● www.nikon.co.uk

This 45.7MP powerhouse is much more than a simple upgrade of the ground-breaking D800 and D810 full-frame DSLRs. It combines the high-resolution virtues of the D810 and the speed of the D500 in a single body, and is incredibly versatile. High ISO and AF performance are also up there with the very best. Add in a tilting touchscreen and 4K video capabilities and you can see why AP's Michael Topham described it as 'one of the finest DSLRs ever made'. Nikon's recent improvements to its SnapBridge connectivity have made it even better.



The Fujifilm X-T3 is a fast performer, capable of 30fps shooting when its electronic shutter is used Fujifilm XF 50-140mm f/2.8 R LM OIS WR, 1/2900sec at f/2.8, ISO 200



Low-light scenes don't faze the Sony Alpha 7R III. Its sensor performance combined with effective 5-axis image stabilisation make handheld night shots like this possible without the need of a tripod
 Sony FE 24-70mm f/2.8 G Master, 1/13sec at f/4, ISO 2000

© MICHAEL TOPHAM



Olympus OM-D E-M1 Mark II

• £1,499 • www.olympus.co.uk

This weatherproof, 20.4MP all-rounder is as fast as it is stylish, capturing 60 raw frames per second in single AF Mode and 18fps in continuous AF tracking mode, backed up by an impressive on-chip phase-detection autofocus system. The OM-D E-M1 Mark II also boasts sophisticated in-body image stabilisation, allowing sharp shots handheld at speeds where you'd normally be reaching for a tripod. Image quality is very respectable, and a great choice of high-quality Micro Four Thirds lenses is available.



Pentax K-1 Mark II

• £1,699
 • www.ricoh-imaging.co.uk

If you want a rugged, fully featured full-frame DSLR, then this updated Pentax flagship may be just the ticket. Its robust, weathersealed body is bristling with buttons and dials, while the 36MP sensor gives unparalleled levels of detail for the price, along with vast dynamic range. The long-running K-mount provides compatibility with a huge range of lenses, while the 5-axis in-body stabilisation helps keep handheld images sharp. The large, clear viewfinder is joined by a flexible-tilt rear LCD.



Sony Alpha 7R III

• £2,899 • www.sony.co.uk

Sony's third-generation high-res mirrorless model combines a 42.4MP full-frame sensor with 10 frames-per-second shooting and highly effective in-body image stabilisation. Its sophisticated hybrid autofocus system is effective across almost the entire frame, and includes Sony's peerless eye-detection focusing. The uprated NP-FZ100 battery gives impressive stamina, while twin SD card slots allow image backup while shooting. An excellent 3.69-million-dot electronic viewfinder rounds off a hugely accomplished package.



Sony Alpha 9

• £3,699 • www.sony.co.uk

This powerful 24.2MP contender is becoming the toast of sports photographers, thanks to its silent operation and blistering 20fps burst rate. The AF is no slouch either, as 693 focal-plane phase-detection AF points mean that around 93% of the frame is being monitored at any given moment. There's also continuous AF/AE tracking for up to 241 raw images, or 362 JPEGs. But while Sony now makes a decent range of high-quality full-frame lenses, it still lags behind when it comes to offering a comprehensive set of telephoto zooms and primes for action photography.

Enthusiast cameras

Cameras labelled as 'enthusiast' models provide the flexibility to shoot a wide range of subjects but without the high price of a pro-level model



Canon EOS 6D Mark II

● £1,549 ● www.canon.co.uk

The EOS 6D Mark II serves as the entry-point to Canon's full-frame DSLR range, and is less than half the price of the next model up: the EOS 5D Mark IV. Built around a 26.2MP CMOS sensor and DIGIC 7 image processor, the EOS 6D Mark II uses the same 45-point AF system as the EOS 80D and employs Canon's Dual Pixel AF technology for fast live view AF. On the back you'll find a fully articulated touchscreen.



Canon EOS 80D

● £999 ● www.canon.co.uk

Released in 2016, the EOS 80D boasts an expanded feature set, greater customisation and more durable construction than its cheaper EOS stablemates. Built around a 24.2MP APS-C CMOS sensor and Canon's DIGIC 6 image processor, the EOS 80D also benefits from Canon's Dual Pixel AF technology, which delivers impressively fast focus lock when used in live view mode. Extensive physical controls are complemented by touchscreen operation via the vari-angle rear LCD display.



Fujifilm X-T20

● £749 ● www.fujifilm.co.uk

The X-T20 is a small, attractive SLR-style mirrorless model that's capable of exceptional image quality, thanks to its 24.3MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS III sensor and X-Processor Pro image processor. It offers continuous shooting at up to 14fps and a sensitivity range of ISO 200–12,800 that's expandable to ISO 100–51,200. Traditional analogue shutter speed and exposure compensation dials are joined by touchscreen control via the tilting rear LCD. Compared to its top-end cousin the X-T3, the X-T20 lacks weathersealing and cannot be used with an optional battery grip, but it does gain a small built-in flash unit.



Nikon D750

● £1,599 ● www.nikon.co.uk

Released towards the end of 2014, the D750 is a richly featured and highly customisable full-frame DSLR targeted at advanced enthusiasts. Built around a 24.3MP full-frame CMOS sensor and Nikon Expeed 4 image processor, it's capable of 8fps continuous shooting and offers a sensitivity range of ISO 100–12,800 with expanded settings up to ISO 51,200. The large, clear viewfinder is complemented by a tilting LCD on the back, while built-in Wi-Fi provides smartphone connectivity. There's no 4K video support, but the D750 can record 1,080p full-HD footage at up to 60fps.



Nikon D7500

● £1,099 ● www.nikon.co.uk

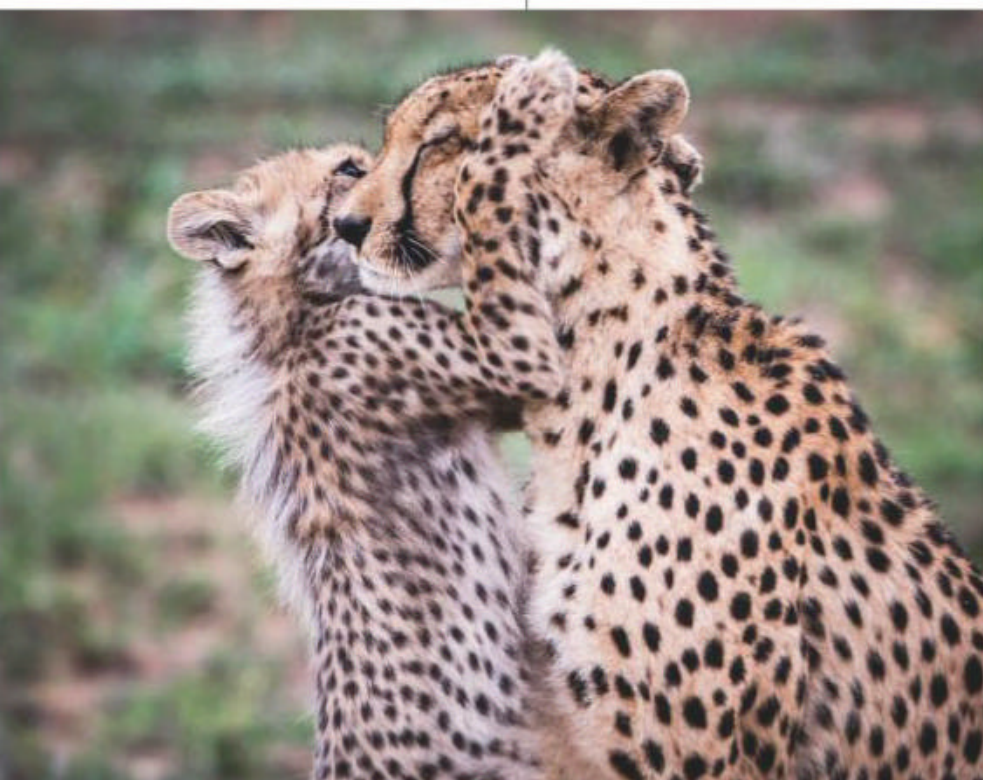
The D7500 DSLR borrows some key hardware from the flagship D500, including its 20.9MP DX-format CMOS sensor and Expeed 5 image processor. While the D7500 is not quite as fast as the D500, (8fps vs 10fps) and comes equipped with a less-advanced AF system (51 AF points vs 153 AF points), it is nonetheless an agile and well-rounded DSLR. It offers a vast sensitivity range from ISO 100 to 51,200 as standard, that can be extended to fully ISO 1,640,000. Crucially, it's £620 cheaper than the D500.



Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark III

● £579 ● www.olympus.co.uk

As with all Olympus OM-D models, the E-M10 Mark III takes its design cues from Olympus's back catalogue of 35mm film SLRs. However, beneath the neatly milled top-plate dials and sculpted handgrip lies a very modern camera. Built around a 16.1MP Micro Four Thirds sensor and TruePic VIII image processor, the E-M10 III benefits from a 2.36-million-dot EVF; a 3in, 1.04-million-dot tilting LCD touchscreen; and a 121-point contrast detect AF system. It's a really charismatic little camera.



Mother cheetah and cub as captured with the Panasonic Lumix G9 on safari in South Africa Panasonic Leica DG Elmarit 200mm f/2.8 Power OIS, 1/200sec at f/5.6, ISO 400

© MICHAEL TOPHAM

Enthusiast DSLRs like the EOS 6D Mark II are usually smaller than pro-spec alternatives, making them well suited for times when you need a lighter model Canon EF 17-40mm f/4 L USM, 1/30sec at f/14, ISO 100



©MICHAEL TOPHAM



Olympus PEN-F

● £999 ● www.olympus.co.uk

The PEN-F is a stylish, lightweight mirrorless camera that's designed to ape the look and feel of the classic 1960s Olympus half-frame rangefinder cameras of the same name. It's much more than just another hipster camera, though. It's equipped with a 20.3MP Micro Four Thirds sensor, 2.36-million-dot EVF, vari-angle touchscreen display, built-in 5-axis image stabilisation and 1,080p full-HD video recording. ISO sensitivity ranges from ISO 80 to 25,600, while continuous shooting is available at up to 10 frames per second. The PEN-F pairs up particularly nicely with compact prime lenses.



Panasonic Lumix DC-G9

● £1,199
● www.panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's flagship Micro Four Thirds stills camera offers a blend of excellent image quality from its 20.3MP sensor and high-speed performance, built around a body that offers arguably the best feel of any mirrorless camera. It shoots up to a blazing 60fps, backed up by sprightly autofocus and a 5-axis image stabilisation system that offers up to 6.5 stops of compensation. Its 3.69m-dot EVF makes tracking subjects a breeze, while the 3in vari-angle screen is instrumental for tricky compositions. With so much to like, it's a fine choice at this price.



Sony Alpha 7 III

● £1,999 ● www.sony.co.uk

With the A7 III, Sony has hit the sweet spot of what serious photographers want from a full-frame model that falls under £2,000. It plays the role of an all-rounder within Sony's Alpha 7 full-frame mirrorless range and comes well equipped with a 24.2MP sensor, 5-axis image stabilisation, 10fps burst shooting and a superior arrangement of 693 phase-detection points and 425 contrast-detection points covering 93% of the frame. It advances hugely from the A7 II, with a revised control layout including an AF-area selection joystick, an improved viewfinder and a longer-lasting battery.



Sony A6500

● £1,279 ● www.sony.co.uk

The APS-C equipped A6500 provides all the relevant tools required by enthusiasts, with its 24.2MP sensor, 5-axis image stabilisation and capable AF tracking making it an excellent performer. Given its compact size and ability to shoot 112 consecutive images in a single 11fps burst, the A6500 is equally well suited to street photography as it is to action, while landscape photographers will find that the A6500's impressive dynamic range gives it plenty of scope for shooting beautiful scenery with. It is a superb all-round APS-C mirrorless model that offers something for everyone.

Beginners' cameras

These models are for those new to photography or who want a camera that's capable of taking good-quality images without breaking the bank



Canon EOS 200D

- £559, with 18-55mm lens
- www.canon.co.uk

Positioned between the entry-level EOS 2000D and mid-range EOS 800D models, the 24.2MP EOS 200D is Canon's smallest DSLR and comes with some key features not found on the EOS 2000D. These include Canon's Dual Pixel AF technology that speeds up focus performance when the camera is in live view, plus a vari-angle touchscreen LCD display. The intuitive control layout makes it easy to use, while Canon's guided user interface helps beginners learn the main settings. If you're considering the 1300D but have a little more to spend, the 200D is worth a look.



Canon EOS M50

- £649, with 15-45mm lens
- www.canon.co.uk

Canon's entry-level mirrorless model is a really likeable camera that's easy for beginners to use but offers plenty of manual control as they grow more experienced. Its compact size and light weight make it easy to carry anywhere, while the 24.1MP APS-C offers great image quality, aided by Canon's excellent JPEG processing. The dual-pixel CMOS sensor enables fast and accurate autofocus, even when using EOS SLR lenses via the EF-EOS M mount adapter. At the back, the fully articulated touchscreen is great for shooting at unusual angles.



Fujifilm X-T100

- £599, with 15-45mm lens
- www.fujifilm.co.uk

Fujifilm's successful X-T series expanded earlier this year with the X-T100. Aimed at novices who desire an electronic viewfinder and tilting screen at a more affordable price than any previous X-T series camera, the X-T100 is equipped with a 24.2MP APS-C sensor and provides a sensitivity range of ISO 100-51,200 with expansion. It has all the charm of the X-series design, with useful user aids such as low-power Bluetooth connectivity and Wi-Fi to share images effortlessly. As a model designed for first-time buyers and those advancing from smartphones, it's very appealing from both an aesthetic and performance perspective.



Nikon D3400

- £479, with 18-55mm lens
- www.nikon.co.uk

Nikon's entry-level DSLR is a solid performer, providing excellent image quality from the 24MP DX-format sensor, aided by a proven 11-point autofocus system. There's an easy-to-use Guide Mode for beginners, along with full manual control for more-advanced users. Bluetooth connectivity allows images to be transferred to a smartphone for sharing on social media. The updated D3500 provides a near-identical feature set in a redesigned body, that features a deeper, more comfortable handgrip and improved battery life rating for only a little more money. However as long as stocks remain in the shops, the D3400 represents better value.



Nikon D5600

- £649, with 18-55mm lens
- www.nikon.co.uk

Positioned above the D3400 but below the D7200, the 24.2MP D5600 is an upper-entry-level DSLR. As such, it comes with some additional and enhanced features over the D3400, including a larger and sharper 3.2in, 1.04-million-dot vari-angle LCD display (compared with the D3400's fixed 3in, 921,000-dot display) that also provides touchscreen control. In addition, the D5600 gets 39 AF points compared to the D3400's 11 AF points. The D5600 also features Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity along with a time-lapse movie mode.



Olympus PEN E-PL9

- £579, with 14-42mm lens
- www.olympus.co.uk

The E-PL9 is the entry point to Olympus's stylish range of mirrorless cameras. Equipped with a 16.1MP Micro Four Thirds sensor, the E-PL9 also benefits from effective 5-axis in-body image stabilisation. While there's no electronic viewfinder, it has a tilting screen for selfies that supports touch control. Video capabilities extend to 4K 30p capture with the option to extract 8MP still images from movie footage. Those after a camera with a similar spec but also a viewfinder should check out the Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark III.



Users of the Fujifilm X-T100 can crop in tightly when required and retain an excellent level of detail Fujifilm XF 50mm f/2 R WR, 1/5400sec at f/2, ISO 200



It might be entry-level, but Nikon's D5600 is very capable of delivering good results in tricky conditions
Nikon 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 G AF-P DX VR,
1/30sec at f/8, ISO 100

© AUDLEY JARVIS



Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX800

- £299, with 12-32mm lens
- www.panasonic.com/uk

The GX800 is an entry-level mirrorless camera built around a 16MP Micro Four Thirds sensor. Designed to be easy to use, the GX800 is nonetheless equipped with a good range of features, including 4K video capture and Panasonic's 4K Photo mode. While it lacks an electronic viewfinder, the tiltable 3in, 1.04-million-dot rear LCD display provides touchscreen control, and can be flipped upwards by 180° for easy selfies. The tiny 12-32mm kit zoom is a perfect match for the small body.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX80

- £399, with 12-32mm lens
- www.panasonic.com/uk

This small but well-featured mirrorless camera is built around a 16MP Micro Four Thirds sensor. It has built-in 5-axis image stabilisation, 4K video capture, a 2.76-million-dot electronic viewfinder, a 1.04-million-dot tilting touchscreen and 4K Photo mode that facilitates the extraction of 8MP still images from 4K movie footage. Small and portable, and usually bundled with a tiny retractable zoom, the GX80 is a well-rounded camera that's attractively priced.



Pentax K-70

- £629, with 18-50mm lens
- www.ricoh-imaging.co.uk

Pentax has gained a deserved reputation for producing cameras that provide exceptional value for money, and the entry-level K-70 DSLR is no exception. Built around a 24.2MP APS-C CMOS sensor, notable highlights are a large, bright pentaprism viewfinder with 100% coverage, full weathersealing and an in-body image-stabilisation system – none of which you'll find on the K-70's direct rivals from Nikon and Canon. Other features include ISO sensitivity of ISO 100-102,400 and 6fps continuous shooting. For the price, it's very hard to beat.



Sony Alpha 6000

- £499, with 16-50mm lens
- www.sony.co.uk

Released in 2014, the 24.3MP Alpha 6000 is best thought of as a slightly less advanced, yet significantly cheaper, alternative to the more recent Alpha 6300 and Alpha 6500 models. While it lacks 4K video, the Alpha 6000 still has some solid features, such as its hybrid autofocus system that combines 179 phase-detection AF points and 25 contrast-detect ones for almost instant focus lock, plus ISO sensitivity of ISO 100-25,600, up to 11fps continuous shooting and Wi-Fi/NFC functionality. There's also a built-in electronic viewfinder and tilting rear screen.

Fixed-lens cameras

If you're happy to move your feet to get the best shot, or simply want an all-in-one camera, you'll struggle to find better examples than these



Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark II

• £529 • www.canon.co.uk

The PowerShot G7 X Mark II sits just above the entry-level G9 X II (£399) within Canon's flagship G-series premium compact range. Built around a 20.1MP, 1in CMOS sensor, the G7 X II is equipped with a 24-100mm equivalent 4.2x zoom lens that provides a fast f/1.8-2.8 aperture. While there's no viewfinder, the tilting 3in, 1.04-million-dot rear LCD display is impressively sharp.



Fujifilm X100F

• £1,199 • www.fujifilm.eu/uk

The X100F is the latest model in Fujifilm's line of fixed-focal-length premium compacts. Using the same 24.3MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS sensor as the flagship X-Pro2 and X-T2 mirrorless models, the X100F has a 23mm f/2 Fujinon lens that's ideal for street photography. The X100F also has a hybrid viewfinder that can provide an optical view with framing guides, or a 2.36-million-dot electronic viewfinder with 100% coverage.



Canon PowerShot G1 X Mark III

• £1,089 • www.canon.co.uk

This small SLR-styled camera somehow manages to house a 24.2MP APS-C sensor, which means that it offers excellent image quality, along with snappy autofocus thanks to its dual-pixel CMOS design. What's more, the weather-proofed body is covered in well-placed dials that provide plenty of manual control. Last but not least, the central viewfinder and fully articulated screen make composing images a pleasure.



Leica Q (Typ 116)

• £3,499 • uk.leica-camera.com

The Leica Q has a 24.2MP full-frame sensor, a class-leading 3.68-million-dot electronic viewfinder and a 3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen display. The fixed Leica Summilux lens provides a focal length of 28mm with a maximum aperture of f/1.7, with built-in optical stabilisation to keep images sharp at slower shutter speeds. The beautifully crafted body and elegantly pared-back controls make this a very desirable camera indeed.



Olympus Tough TG-5

• £379 • www.olympus.co.uk

The TG-5 is a rugged premium compact, waterproof to 15m, shockproof to 2.1m, crushproof to 100kg and freeze-proof to -15°C. Features include a 1/2.3in backside-illuminated 12MP CMOS sensor and a 4x optical zoom that's equivalent to 25-100mm in 35mm terms.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX100 II

• £849 • www.panasonic.com/uk

This classically styled model sports analogue control dials for a really engaging shooting experience. Its unique multi-aspect ratio sensor and Leica 24-75mm equivalent f/1.7-2.8 lens give plenty of creative options that should appeal to enthusiast photographers.



Sony RX10 IV

• £1,799 • www.sony.co.uk

The undisputed king of all-in-one bridge cameras, Sony's RX10 IV pairs a 20MP, 1in type sensor with a huge 24-600mm equivalent zoom lens. It can shoot at 24 frames per second, with the 315-point AF system keeping subjects sharp. It offers full manual control, including an aperture ring around the lens.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ2000

• £879 • www.panasonic.com/uk

The FZ2000 is a stills/video hybrid camera much like the Sony RX10 IV. It's built around a 20.1MP, 1in sensor, with a 24-480mm equivalent zoom. It can record Cinema 4K with no upper time limit, and should appeal to videographers and photography enthusiasts alike.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ200

• £689 • www.panasonic.com/uk

This long-zoom, compact-body 'travel zoom' camera pairs a 20.1MP 1in type sensor with a huge 15x, 24-360mm zoom. Compared to the older TZ100, it also includes a vastly improved electronic viewfinder. It works really well as a point and shoot, but also offers manual control.



Sony RX100 IV

• £649 • www.sony.co.uk

The Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV uses the same 20.1MP Exmor RS sensor as the RX100 V update, and provides the same basic 4K video functions. But it's slower at burst shooting and lacks the sophisticated AF of the Mark V. If you can live with these minor inconveniences, the RX100 IV is a great choice.



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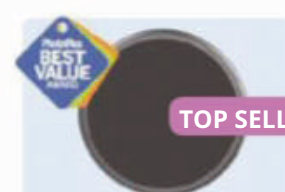
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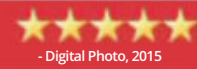


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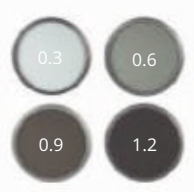
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Canon

If you fancy expanding your collection of lenses for your Canon DSLR, these are worth a close look

Canon EF 50mm f/1.8 STM

• £119 • www.canon.co.uk



Compatible with full-frame and APS-C DSLRs, this 'nifty fifty' is a short telephoto lens with an equivalent focal length of 80mm on an APS-C. It incorporates a stepper motor (STM) for smooth and quiet AF. Stopping down from f/1.8 to f/2.8 improves sharpness, and all traces of vignetting disappear by f/4.



Canon EF-S 10-18mm f/4.5-5.6 IS STM

• £239 • www.canon.co.uk

If you're after a wideangle zoom for your Canon APS-C DSLR, this is a fine example to contemplate. Its stepping motor technology (STM) helps keep focus operation inaudible, and with 4-stop stabilisation it's possible to shoot sharp, handheld images with shutter speeds as slow as 1/5sec.



Canon EF 70-300mm f/4-5.6 IS II USM

• £464 • www.canon.co.uk

This telephoto zoom incorporates 4-stop image stabilisation and a new Nano USM motor for fast and silent AF. It weighs 720g, has a nine-bladed diaphragm for attractive background blur and is equivalent to 112-480mm when used on APS-C-sensor bodies. The only thing it really lacks is a rubber seal around the mount.



Canon EF-S 60mm f/2.8 USM Macro

• £439 • www.canon.co.uk

This dedicated macro lens for Canon APS-C users is equivalent to 96mm in the 35mm format and will enable you to capture stunning close-ups at true life size (1:1). It has a minimum focusing distance of 20cm, in addition to full-time manual-focus override, and can double up as a useful portrait lens.



Canon EF 85mm f/1.4L IS USM

• £1,379 • www.canon.co.uk

If the Canon EF 85mm f/1.2 L USM II (£1,929) is out of your budget but you want a lens that excels for portraiture, wedding or documentary work, this optic comes highly recommended. It features optical image stabilisation and uses an ultrasonic motor to deliver fast, quiet and accurate autofocus.

Nikon

Nikon's vast range of lenses caters for all types of user, from beginner to the working professional

AF-S DX Nikkor 35mm f/1.8G

• £149 • www.nikon.co.uk



This is a very useful general-purpose focal length when used with Nikon APS-C DSLRs, and although this lens is a few years old now, it remains a good buy. There was some colour fringing visible in our tests, and this was echoed to a very slight degree in real-world photographs, but not enough to undermine overall image quality.



AF-S DX Nikkor 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR

• £659 • www.nikon.co.uk

This lens is a considerable step up from the kit zooms supplied with Nikon's DSLRs. It features a 24-128mm equivalent angle of view, along with a Vibration Reduction (VR II) system that provides 3.5 stops of stabilisation. Overall it's a versatile performer, with a minimum focus distance of 38cm.



Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/4 S

• £999 • www.nikon.co.uk

Nikon's first zoom lens for its full-frame mirrorless system may have an unspectacular headline specification, but makes up for it with superb optics. Indeed it gives sharp images regardless of the aperture, focal length or focus distance set. In addition, its compact size is a great match for the Z 6 and Z 7.



AF-S Nikkor 50mm f/1.8G

• £209 • www.nikon.co.uk

While this 'nifty fifty' is showing its age, for portraits and street work it doesn't really put a foot wrong. The 50mm f/1.8G includes some very useful features such as a Silent Wave Motor, curved aperture blades and reduced chromatic aberrations. It makes a great companion for APS-C DSLRs, equivalent to 75mm.



AF-S Nikkor 85mm f/1.4G

• £1,549 • www.nikon.co.uk

This fast, short telephoto portrait lens has become something of a classic since it appeared in 2011. Optically it's superb, giving a well-judged balance of high sharpness and attractive bokeh. AF is nothing short of top-class: it's reliable, quick and truly silent. There is a small hint of chromatic aberration wide open.

Fujifilm

The X series is supported by sensational primes and zooms. We reveal some of the best

Fujinon XF 23mm f/2 R WR

● £409 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk



This lens offers a focal length equivalent to 35mm and is incredibly versatile since it forces you to interact with your subject by moving your feet. It's compact in size and reassuringly weather-resistant: it can operate in temperatures as low as -10°C. Featuring nine aperture blades, it produces attractive bokeh and is fast and notably quiet when focusing.



Fujinon XF 80mm f/2.8 R LM OIS WR Macro

● £1,149 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

If you're a Fujifilm user looking to create 1:1 macro images, this optic should be high on your list. Unlike the XF 60mm f/2.4 R Macro, it doesn't require extension tubes to photograph the world in minute detail. It also boasts a highly effective optical image stabilisation system to suppress camera shake.



Fujinon XF 50mm f/2 R WR

● £425 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

This mid-telephoto prime offers a focal length equivalent to 76mm in 35mm film terms, and a maximum aperture of f/2, making it ideal for portraiture, low-light conditions and most everyday subjects. It is petite and lightweight, and has an optical formula that arranges nine glass elements in seven groups.



Fujinon XF 56mm f/1.2 R

● £849 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Providing a similar angle of view to an 85mm lens on a full-frame camera, this versatile piece of glass has an optical design featuring 11 elements in eight groups. This combination ensures sharpness while also reducing chromatic aberration. Sharpness and detail are good, even when the lens is used wide open.



Fujinon XF 16-55mm f/2.8 R LM WR

● £899 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Weighing a hefty 655g, and featuring extensive weather-proofing, this lens is built to withstand challenging conditions. It has a focal length equivalent to 24-84mm (in 35mm film terms) and is ideal for all subjects from portraits to landscapes. It features a complex arrangement of 17 elements in 12 groups.

Olympus

If you're a Micro Four Thirds user, your bag is likely to have enough space to fit one of these

Olympus M.Zuiko Digital 17mm f/1.8

● £369 ● www.olympus.co.uk



One of the best things about Micro Four Thirds is the availability of small, high-quality primes such as this 17mm f/1.8. With a moderate wideangle view equivalent to 35mm on full-frame, it's ideal for street photography where you want to be discreet. The push-pull manual focus ring with distance and depth-of-field scales is a particularly nice touch.



Olympus M.Zuiko Digital 45mm f/1.8

● £199 ● www.olympus.co.uk

Perhaps the single must-have prime for Micro Four Thirds users is this tiny, inexpensive lens, which gives a short telephoto view equivalent to 90mm. Its relatively fast maximum aperture makes it perfect for shooting pictures of people indoors, with a nice degree of background blur. It gets a big thumbs up from us.



Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 60mm f/2.8 Macro

● £359 ● www.olympus.co.uk

This lightweight prime is a real heavyweight when it comes to close-up work, combining excellent image quality with true 1:1 macro. A large focus-limit switch comes in handy for photographing longer-distance subjects such as portraits. Its weathersealed construction is the icing on the cake.



Olympus M.Zuiko Digital 12-100mm f/4 IS Pro

● £899 ● www.olympus.co.uk

All-in-one superzoom lenses are usually optically compromised, but by employing a complex 17-element, 11-group design Olympus has bucked this trend, producing a lens that performs remarkably well at all focal lengths. Weather-resistant construction adds to its considerable all-round appeal.



Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 40-150mm f/2.8 Pro

● £1,099 ● www.olympus.co.uk

A perfect partner for Olympus's 12-40mm f/2.8, this top-notch large-aperture telephoto zoom provides stunning image quality across its 80-300mm equivalent range. Fast, silent AF makes it great for shooting moving subjects, while a weathersealed construction means it'll keep on going when conditions get tough.

Panasonic

Micro Four Thirds users certainly aren't short of great lenses. These examples start from just £249

Leica DG Summilux 25mm f/1.4 ASPH



● £459 ● www.panasonic.com/uk

The Leica DG 25mm f/1.4 is an ultra-fast standard prime for use with Panasonic and Olympus Micro Four Thirds mirrorless cameras. Comprising nine elements in seven groups, internal construction includes two aspherical lenses and one Ultra High Refractive index lens. The lens also benefits from coatings to minimise ghosting and flare.



Lumix G 7-14mm f/4 ASPH

● £739 ● www.panasonic.com/uk

Owing to the 2x crop factor of the Micro Four Thirds standard, this high-end ultra-wideangle zoom provides a focal range equivalent to 14-28mm in 35mm terms. This makes it ideal for landscape enthusiasts looking to capture expansive horizons. Internally, the lens is constructed from 16 elements in 12 groups.



Lumix G Vario 100-300mm f/4-5.6 II

● £549 ● www.panasonic.com/uk

With a 35mm equivalent range of 200-600mm, this telephoto zoom, with built-in optical image stabilisation, is an ideal lens for wildlife and sports shooters. It features one Extra-Low Dispersion lens to combat fringing and its splash-proof construction means you can continue to use it in light rain.



Leica DG Nocticon 42.5mm f/1.2 ASPH Power OIS

● £1,199 ● www.panasonic.com/uk

The Nocticon DG 42.5mm is a high-end ultra-fast lens that's tailor-made for portrait photography owing to its 85mm equivalent focal length (in 35mm terms) and its ability to create an extremely shallow depth-of-field effect. It also benefits from optical stabilisation.



Lumix G 20mm f/1.7 II ASPH

● £249 ● www.panasonic.com/uk

The Lumix G 20mm f/1.7 is a fast and versatile standard prime that's useful in a wide range of situations. The compact 'pancake' design makes it a great lens for urban photography where large lenses are neither practical nor desirable. Internally, the 20mm f/1.7 II is constructed from seven elements in five groups.

Sony

There was once only a small selection of full-frame E-mount lenses, but not any more

Sony FE 24-105mm f/4 G OSS



● £1,199 ● www.sony.co.uk

For Sony full-frame mirrorless users, this is a really versatile lens that gives consistently excellent results. It's impressively sharp, features a weather-resistant construction, and provides a really useful zoom range without being too bulky. In short, it ticks all the right boxes and is arguably the best-judged general-purpose zoom Sony has yet made.



Sony FE 85mm f/1.8

● £599 ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony's full-frame FE lenses have gained a reputation for being huge and expensive, but the firm also makes some smaller and more affordable options for enthusiast photographers. This 85mm prime is a great portrait lens for both full-frame and APS-C users, combining decent sharpness with attractive background blur.



Sony FE 70-200mm f/4 G OSS

● £1,149 ● www.sony.co.uk

Thanks to its f/4 aperture, this premium telezoom is a great match to Alpha 7 cameras in terms of size and weight, and notably more portable than its f/2.8 sibling. It's also equally at home on Sony's Alpha 6000-series models. Optically, it delivers the goods, with its fast focusing sealing the deal.



Sony FE 90mm f/2.8 Macro G OSS

● £879 ● www.sony.co.uk

The only autofocus lens for Sony full-frame mirrorless that offers 1:1 magnification, this short telephoto macro is a superlative lens. Indeed, it's one of the sharpest we've ever tested, while also giving beautifully rendered out-of-focus backgrounds for portraiture. The push-pull focus ring is also useful for macro work.



Sony FE 12-24mm f/4 G

● £1,699 ● www.sony.co.uk

For ultra-wideangle lovers, Sony's latest optic is one of the best around. Significantly smaller than comparable lenses for DSLRs, it nonetheless delivers consistently excellent image quality. While it's certainly not for everyone and will exceed some tight budgets, it's a great option for those who shoot interiors, architecture or landscapes.

Third party

After casting our eyes over some of the best own-brand lenses from camera manufacturers, now let's look at ten of the top third-party optics



Samyang AF 35mm f/2.8 FE

- £279
- www.samyanglensglobal.com

This lens is a moderate wideangle autofocus prime designed for Sony full-frame mirrorless cameras. It's the third Samyang lens designed for the Sony FE mount, following on from the AF 14mm f/2.8 FE and the AF 50mm f/1.4 FE. Best of all, it's sharp, relatively inexpensive and is a great option for situations when you want to be unobtrusive.



Tamron SP 70-200mm f/2.8 Di VC USD G2

- £1,299
- www.intro2020.co.uk

This telephoto zoom offers a big saving over Canon and Nikon's 70-200mm offerings, which cost closer to £2,000. With excellent optics, effective image stabilisation, fast autofocus and a weathersealed construction, it offers excellent value for money. Indeed, it gives up little compared to its pricier rivals and shouldn't be disregarded from your shortlist. Overall, this is one of Tamron's finest lenses yet and comes highly recommended for the enthusiast and semi-pro.



Sigma 14-24mm f/2.8 DG HSM Art

- £1,399
- www.sigma-imaging-uk.com

If you'd like an ultra wideangle zoom with an f/2.8 aperture, this excellent optic presents an attractive saving over alternatives such as the Nikon AF-S 14-24mm f/2.8 G ED (£1,799). It's a little soft at the edges wide open, but it handles distortion well and tops this off with quiet autofocus and robust build quality, albeit not weathersealed.



Tamron SP 85mm f/1.8 Di VC USD

- £749
- www.intro2020.co.uk

If you'd like a fast, image-stabilised 85mm prime, this lens is well worth a closer look. The short telephoto focal length is ideally suited to portraiture, both on full-frame and APS-C cameras. On APS-C it provides a 135mm-equivalent angle of view, and although you may glance at the price and think it's a lot to pay, it's smaller and cheaper than any 85mm f/1.4 alternatives you might look at. It must also be said that the build quality is excellent compared to some older designs.



Sigma 50mm f/1.4 DG HSM Art

- £599
- www.sigma-imaging-uk.com

If you're after one of the finest 50mm primes, look no further. This optic delivers sublime image quality and renders out-of-focus highlights beautifully. It's a heavy lens that handles best on DSLRs that feature large grips, such as the Canon EOS 5D Mark IV and Nikon D850.



Sigma 105mm f/2.8 Macro EX DG OS HSM

- £359
- www.sigma-imaging-uk.com

This lens offers a sensational close-up performance. It has optical image stabilisation with a 4-stop benefit in shake reduction. What's more, it feels robust and handles well. It's a must-have lens if you like to reproduce subjects at life-size.



Tamron 100-400mm f/4.5-6.3 Di VC USD

- £749
- www.intro2020.co.uk

This compact, lightweight telephoto zoom is aimed at keen amateurs who want to get close to distant subjects without having to splash out more than £1,000. It's compatible with APS-C and full-frame cameras, but vignettes heavily on the latter. The supplied tripod collar is a welcome addition.



Sigma 60-600mm f/4.5-6.3 DG OS HSM Sport

- £1,899
- www.sigma-imaging-uk.com

This large and heavy telezoom is intended to kill two birds with one stone, essentially combining 70-200mm and 150-600mm zooms into one. It incorporates optical stabilisation effective to 4-stops, features an HSM motor for fast and quiet AF and accepts filters via a 105mm thread.



Tamron 28-75mm f/2.8 Di III RXD

- £749
- www.intro2020.co.uk

This mid-range standard zoom is designed for Sony full-frame mirrorless cameras. Its large aperture makes it great for low-light shooting and enables you to isolate subjects from their surroundings while producing attractive blur behind. It's an ideal walkabout lens.



Tokina Firin 20mm f/2 FE MF

- £699
- www.tokinalens.com

This manual-focus fast wideangle prime lens is designed for Sony full-frame mirrorless cameras. It combines impressive optical quality with a robust, all-metal barrel design, and features a traditional aperture ring that can be set to either clicked or clickless operation. It's a great complement to a standard zoom.

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Lens choices for a Dynax 800si SLR

Q I've just renewed an old interest in film and have a Minolta Dynax 800si. I'm thinking of getting a Tamron Macro zoom (AF 18-200mm f/3.5-6.3 XR Di II LD) and wondered if a Di lens (I or II) can be used with a film camera? The current lens is the Minolta AF 35-70mm f/4 so I assumed another AF would be OK.

Ollie Jardine

A Tamron's 'Di' designation means Digitally integrated. This was meant to reassure photographers that their lenses were good to use with DSLRs. Early Di lenses were simply modified versions of existing film SLR lenses. The Di label meant there was an upgraded anti-reflection coating to address mirror-box reflections off the surface of the sensor that were absent with film. Later Di lenses are optimised to address corner-shading issues with digital sensors, especially with wideangle lenses. There are two problems with your query. The most fundamental is that Di II lenses are designed for APS-C 'crop' sensor cameras. Di II lenses won't cover the entire 35mm film full frame of your Dynax 800si. Don't even think about Di III lenses; they are for mirrorless cameras only. The second problem is that your Dynax 800si can only autofocus lenses that support Minolta's long-established shaft-drive focusing system. The focus motor is inside the camera body and operates the lens focusing via a driveshaft that links through the lens mount. Minolta Smooth Autofocus Motor (SAM) and SuperSonic Motor (SSM) lenses, with focus motors in the lenses, were introduced in 2009, much later than the Dynax 800si, which was launched in 1997. SAM or SSM lenses can be used, but only manually focused.

How can I make a pin-hole lens?

Q I can recall making a simple pin-hole camera as a child at school. It was a tin that simply projected an upside-down image onto a sheet of tracing paper, but it was great fun. I'm sure this can be done on an interchangeable lens camera but I don't know where to start. I have a Sony A6000. Can you provide some tips for pin-hole photography? Is it actually worthwhile?

Gloria Heale

A The simplest method is to use a spare lens mount body cap and a piece of aluminium foil. First drill a hole, carefully centred, about 3-5 mm wide through



This image was taken with a pin-hole camera



Use a spare lens mount body cap to create a pin-hole lens

the middle of the body cap. Then you need to make as small a hole as possible in the aluminium foil. Use a small needle or a fine-tipped pin. You only need to puncture the foil with the very tip of the needle or pin; there is no need to push it through as that will make the hole unnecessarily large. Use something like a plastic chopping board under the foil to limit the progress of the pin or needle. Next, fix the foil with the hole at the centre of the hole in the body cap. It's best to place the punctured foil on the inside of the cap. I've used Blu-Tack to secure the foil. Place the modified cap on the camera and you should see a dim and soft view through the pin hole. Using A or M modes experiment with ISO sensitivity and shutter speed to get the best results.

Check that a prospective lens supports the shaft drive if you want to avoid focusing manually.

Keeping my photos safe

Q My digital photograph collection is on the verge of passing the 1TB threshold. That's about 75,000 photos from the last 15 years. I keep a backup of my photos on an external 1TB USB hard disk, but it's almost full. Should I consider backing up to the Cloud? What about dedicated computer backup software like Acronis True Image 2018? I see that Windows 10 also has a backup system built-in. It's all rather confusing.

Caz Thomas

A Uploading all your photos to the Cloud will take a long time and could be expensive. Unlimited free photo storage is offered, for example, by Google, but your originals are likely to be compressed. The built-in backup tool in Windows 10 certainly works, but it's not quite intuitive to use. Acronis True Image is very flexible and powerful, and it has a backup to the Cloud option. It can be complicated to set up, partly because it has so many options. Using True Image you can go back to previous versions of files that have been backed up. A disadvantage is that your storage can be eaten up surprisingly quickly. A simple solution is to make sure your

photos are in a folder, preferably using a sub-folder structure. Then clone this to an external drive. You can then synchronise the folder on your computer hard drive with the backup on the external hard drive using a file synchronisation utility, for example from <https://freefilesync.org/>. For maximum security make a third copy on a second drive and keep it at a different location. Another option is a Network Attached Storage (NAS) drive using several hard disks managed in a disk fault-tolerant RAID array. It's more expensive, and you'd need a USB drive to back the NAS up, but it adds another layer of resilience.

Q&A compiled by Ian Burley

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Tony Kemplen on the ...

Zeiss Ikon Symbolica

Tony tries out a Zeiss camera that was made more attractive for the less-technically minded

The Zeiss Ikon brand was a major player in European camera design for much of the last century. Formed in 1926, the company brought together four existing camera and lens makers under one umbrella. The aftermath of the Second World War left the firm spread across both sides of the Iron Curtain, the East and West divisions each developing its own range of cameras. In the West, the main plant was in Stuttgart, and this is where its small, neat, precision-made 35mm compacts were manufactured. Initially named Contina, various iterations evolved over two decades, with names like Colora, Contessa and this week's camera, the Symbolica. By the time production ceased in 1972, some three dozen models had been produced.

My father used an early Contina for the Kodachromes he took on our family holidays in the 1960s, and that camera, along with several later acquisitions is still going strong. With the rise of amateur photography, and the gradual introduction of automated features, Zeiss felt the need to make its complicated-looking compacts more attractive to the less technically minded user. The Symbolicas, of which there were two, are an example of this trend. Camera snobs might consider this as dumbing down, but anything that makes our hobby easier to get into for the novice gets my vote.

As the name suggests, symbols are used in place of pesky intimidating numbers, so rather than focus in feet or metres, you have a choice of head and shoulders, group, or landscape, indicated by simple, but unambiguous icons.



Tony's wife turns urn designer at Chatsworth House, taken with the Symbolica

When it comes to exposure, things are even simpler, there's only one symbol, that of a sun. This doesn't of course mean that the camera can only be used in bright conditions – turning the ring with the sun symbol adjusts the settings, the correct exposure being signalled by a needle on the top of the body being centred in its little window. The later version also had this needle visible in the viewfinder, so setting the exposure was a slicker process, and could be done with the camera at eye level. Correct exposure was vital



The Symbolica has easy-to-understand symbols rather than numbers

'For exposure, there's only one symbol, that of a sun'

for colour slides, as unlike using negatives, there is no scope for compensating for under or over exposure at the printing stage; the slide goes straight in the projector, and what you see is what you get.

The Prontomat shutter's speeds range from 1/30sec to 1/300sec, while the 45mm Tessar lens has apertures going from f/2.8 to f/22; yet despite this range, the user has no choice or control over the combination chosen. At one end of the scale you're served up with 1/30sec at f/2.8, and at the other you get 1/300sec at f/22. This is rather like an early version of what today we might call 'programme mode'.

I took my Symbolica to Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, where it had no trouble delivering the correct exposure in a range of lighting scenarios. The photo above shows my wife Sandra playing with an interactive urn designer in the courtyard.

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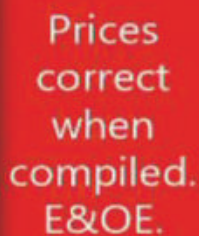
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Tony Kemplen's love of photography began as a teenager and ever since he has been collecting cameras with a view to testing as many as he can. You can follow his progress on his 52 Cameras blog at 52cameras.blogspot.co.uk. More photos from the Symbolica: www.flickr.com/photos/tony_kemplen/albums/72157674450913628

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SONY

Gain control of expressive freedom

The Sony A7 III, with newly developed 24.2MP full-frame sensor

The third iteration of Sony's popular A7 brings even more advancements to the company's coveted CSC line-up. The Mark III boasts a newly developed back-illuminated 24.2MP full-frame Exmor R CMOS sensor and a redeveloped BIONZ X processing engine. Add 693 phase-detection and 425 contrast detection AF points, 15-stops of dynamic range and 4K HDR video, and this latest mirrorless device is sure to prove popular with photographers and filmmakers alike.



A7 III Body £1999

Lens available separately



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Z 7 with Adapter £3499
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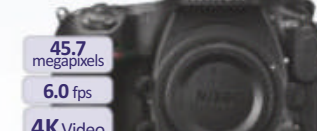
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D850 Body £3499

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Olympus 45mm f1.2 Pro.....£1199
Olympus 12-40mm f2.8 Pro.....£759
Olympus 12-100mm f4 Pro.....£1699
Olympus 7-14mm f2.8 Pro.....£929
Olympus 14-150mm f4-5.6.....£469

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K-1 II



K-1 II Body £1799

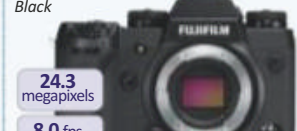
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10.0 fps

1080p movie mode

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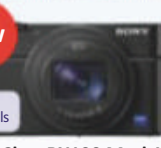
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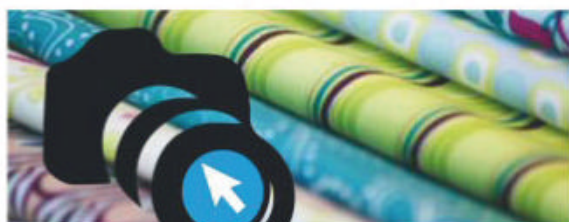


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Final Analysis

Roger Hicks considers... An image from 'Caesura', 2016, by Demetris Koilalous

Some books demand more of their readers than others. And so, by the same token, do some pictures. At first sight, *Caesura: The Duration of a Sigh* (Kehrer Verlag, 2018) is quite dull: pictures of people, detritus and landscapes. But then you realise what it is about. Slowly it becomes immersive; we become one with its subjects. In an afterword, Bill Kouwenhoven quotes the Book of Leviticus: 'But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you.'

The pictures were taken in Mytilene and are of, or about, refugees more or less freshly arrived in Greece: en route, they hope, from their old lives to new ones. Technically, a 'caesura' is a pause or break-point within a poem. Here, it is a pause or break-point within people's lives.

Look closer

Let us go back to how things seem at first sight. What is this a picture of? Rubbish on a tree: plastic bags, probably. But look closer. These are not plastic bags but clothes drying. They may be most of what an individual or even a whole family was able to bring this far in their long trek. Who would undertake such a journey if they were not driven by desperation? Would you?

No doubt there are economic migrants among these refugees. But equally, when you look at the lives portrayed by Koilalous, it is hard to believe that economic migrants make up anything like the percentage claimed by nationalistic politicians and the gutter press. The misery of their lives, the poverty, the uncertainty: all are harrowing.

© DEMETRIS KOILALOUS



'Like many of the pictures in the book, this one is deliberately artless. It is a snapshot, right down to the sloping horizon'

The underlying message is that these are people like us, but without our advantages. Their countries are torn by war and persecution, as ours in Europe are not; at least for now, though there are plenty alive who remember WWII, and others who fear for the future.

Like many of the pictures in the book, this one is deliberately artless. It is a snapshot, right down to the sloping horizon: it would not win any prizes at a camera club exhibition. But imagine for a moment that it had been exquisitely photographed with

a large-format camera on a tripod. We might marvel at the way the photographer had extracted beauty from ugliness. But this is not even ugly. It is simply banal, everyday – which well captures the banality and everydayness of its subjects' lives. They need food and shelter; they need to wash their few clothes. They need hope. This book, and this picture, helps us to put ourselves in their situation.

AP

Roger Hicks has been writing about photography since 1981 and has published more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz (visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.eu). Every week in this column Roger deconstructs a classic or contemporary photograph. **Next week he considers an image from the US Library of Congress**

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